

# RIDING THE INTERNET **Esquire**

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN  
DECEMBER 1994 • \$2.50

## INSIDE THE MIND OF DAVE

Enter at Your  
Own Risk  
**BY BILL ZEHME**

**PETE HAMILL**  
Is America  
Committing  
Cultural  
Suicide?

**SUSAN FALUDI**  
Why Guys  
Play with Dolls

**CHIP BROWN**  
The Radioactive  
Breakfast Club

**LYNN DARLING**  
Jennifer Jason  
Leigh Feels  
Your Pain





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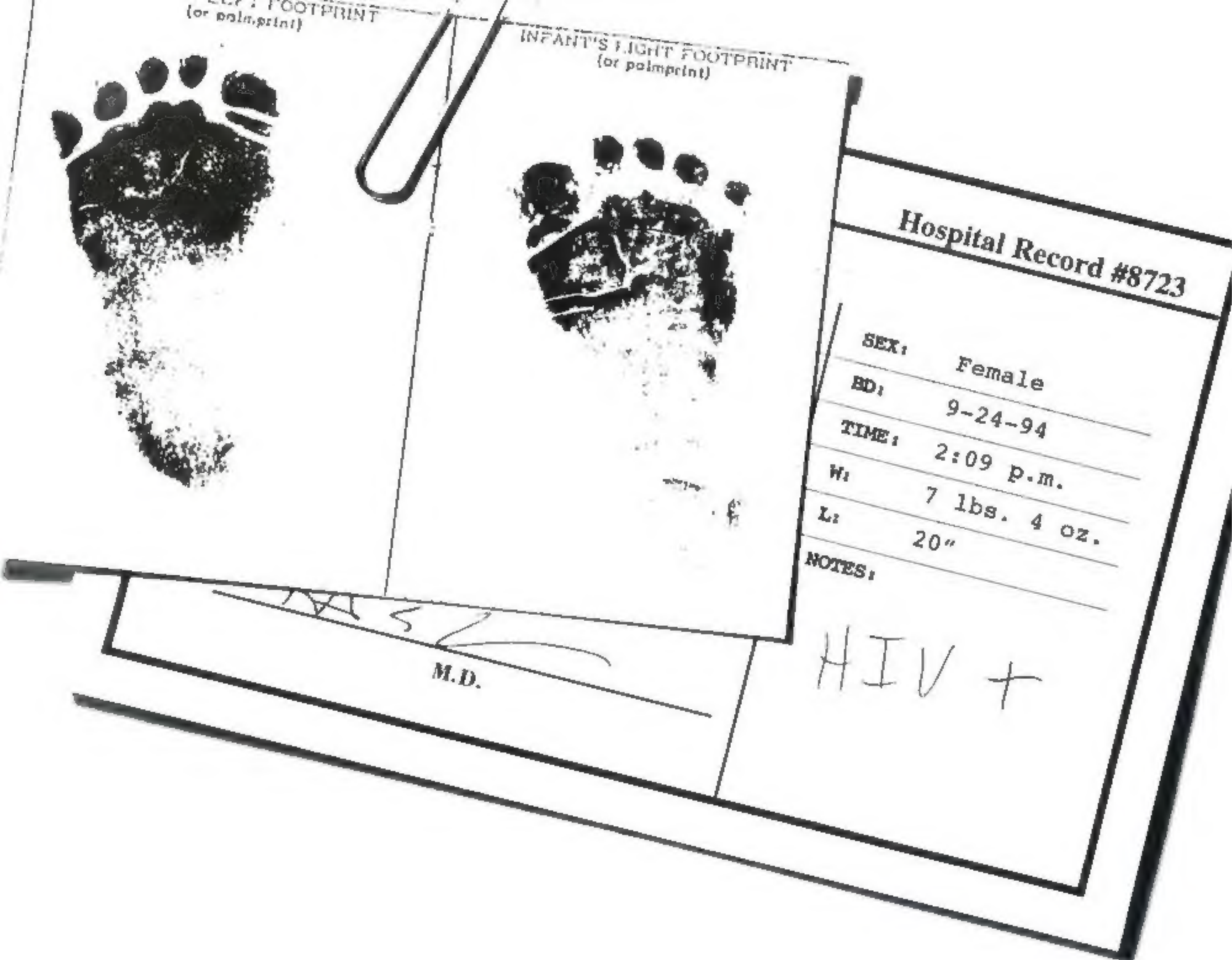
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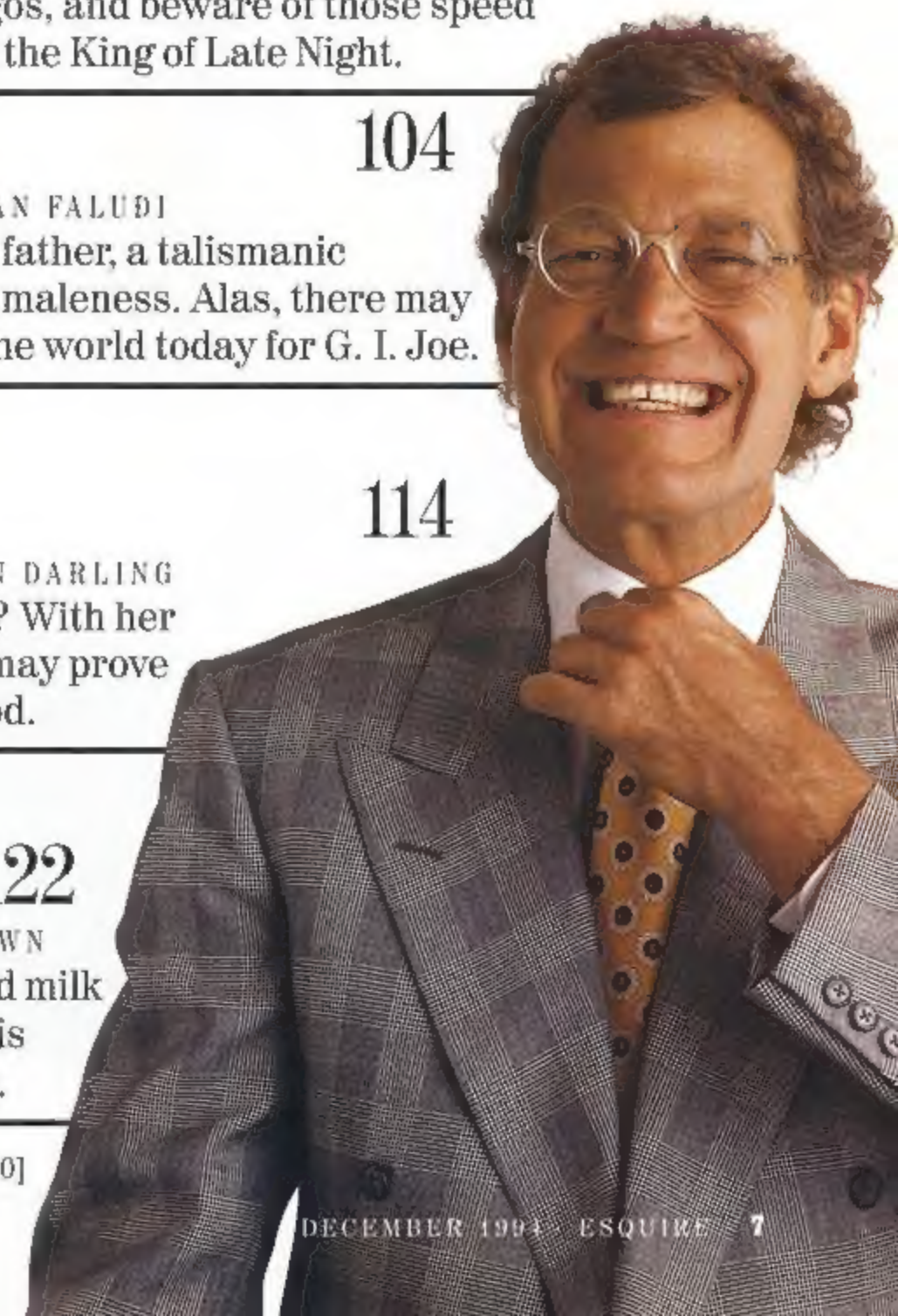
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In the early '50s, scientists tested irradiated milk on "retarded" boys. Now a new generation is trying to decide if they did anything wrong.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER LITTLE

COVER: HAIR BY HISAO EO. MAKEUP BY MICHELE O'CALLAGHAN.



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BUCKLE UP—TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE LIVES.



FORD DESIGNERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
SUSAN K. WESTFALL, DAVID HILTON, GARY BRADDOCK, SOO KANG, PAUL ARNONE, AARON WALKER

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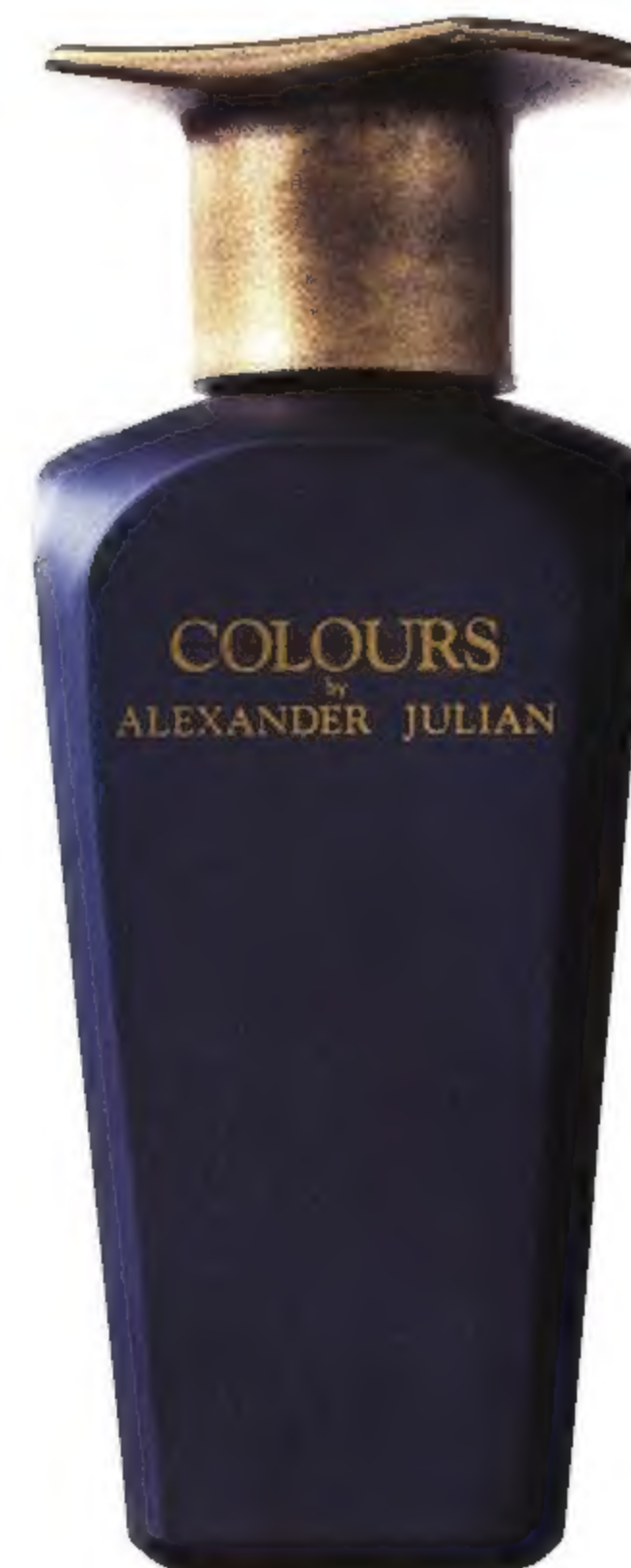
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## THE SOUND AND THE FURY

### Blasting the Canon

I HAD TO LAUGH out loud upon discovering just how hip and smart Esquire is. As if in a hip joke on *Seinfeld*, I came upon Harold Bloom's hilarious treatise on what he thinks constitutes the canon of American literature ("The Books You Should Have Read by Now," September). You sly bastards, hiding the best joke when Jerry Seinfeld's cover promised a different insight. Bloom's list proved that the American mind hasn't declined; it's just a comical theme park where self-important lit protos can natter to their hearts' content.

—STEVEN KAMINSKI  
Warren, Mich.

BLOOM'S LIST IS FULL of worthy titles, but eclecticism itself does not make a canon. But if his list proves anything, it is that books remain the best way to ride the information superhighway.

LEE HILL  
Calgary, Alberta

AS A PASSIONATE READER, I found Bloom's list of recommended books rewarding, especially for its generous selection of poets, but no Ken Kesey, Tom McGuane, or Jim Harrison? I'm afraid poor Harold flunked his acid test.

—TIM CONLEY  
Montclair, Calif.

**EDITORS' NOTE:** Esquire received dozens of suggestions for additional authors for Bloom's canon. These included, in no particular order: Woody Allen, Dorothy Parker, John Gardner, John Irving, Charles Bakowski, Jay Williams, Dr. Seuss, Frederick Exley, L. Frank Baum, Joseph Heller, Jerry Kosinski, H. L. Mencken, William Burroughs, Joan Didion, Ray Bradbury, Edward Abbey, and many others.

### Picky, Picky

MY WIFE AND I thoroughly enjoyed your intelligence test ("How Smart Are You?" September), and we look forward to what I hope will be an annual exercise and inventory of your readers' abilities and wherewithal. Just one question: Where are the sports questions? Cognizance of sports forms the soul and substance of every archetypal

American male from Stanley Kowalski to William F. Buckley Jr.

—GREG SCHEER  
Tulsa, Okla.

I'M EMBARRASSED to report a meager score of forty-five on your intelligence test. The cultural literacy section was my downfall. I was, however, astute enough to note that the self-portrait by Albrecht Dürer is reversed on the page.

—JON WINGRAH  
Washington, D.C.

### Not Plain Old Plano

AS A SIX-YEAR RESIDENT of Plano, I took particular interest in Philip Weiss's "You Are Now Entering Plano, Texas." Obviously

everyone else in the city did also, for I could not locate a copy of the September Esquire in any store. Several of us shared a copy in the soccer stands (where else?), in the now infamous Carpenter Park. And we all agreed on one thing: Weiss took a lot of positives and turned them into negatives. As one dad said, "Most of what he wrote about is the very reason we all moved here."

CINDY YELVERTON  
Plano, Tex.

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that Weiss didn't take the time to know the real Plano, which he so unjustly portrayed. The real Plano was just named one of only ten all-American cities by the National Civic League and the Alstate Foundation. Our schools are top-rated and our crime rate is one of the lowest in Texas. Yes, we suffered the tragic murder of a seven-year-old girl. But more than one thousand residents searched for her, and we all mourned her death. We're working to enact legislation to help ensure that other children won't suffer her fate. Is this a picture of a community that doesn't care? I don't think so.

JAMES N. MUNS  
Mayer  
Plano, Tex.

YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT Plano, Texas, went above and beyond the call of duty—it was right on target. I've lived there and tried to raise a family there,

but the pressure was brutal. You have just begun to scratch the surface.

—AL HILL  
Pflugerville, Tex.

### Vietnam Irony

HAVING RETURNED to Vietnam myself in 1984, I read Chuck Pfeiffer's "The Ballad of a Green Beret" (September) with interest, and I respect his personal journey. But without intending to, he provided powerful evidence for why that war went so tragically wrong. The address of the Green Beret safe house, 22 Le Loi in Da Nang, is ironic not because *le loi* means "the law" in Vietnam. *Le loi* is the name of Emperor Le Loi, who cast out the hated Chinese in the fifteenth century and founded a dynasty that lasted four centuries. The irony is that the American safe house was on a street named after the greatest Vietnamese hero, a man who threw the foreigners out of his country. Get it?

WILLIAM BROYES JR.  
Austin, Tex.

### Tipped Off

DEMEANING? Master-servant relationship? John Berendt is throwing his pop-psycho mumbo jumbo at tipping ("The Case Against Tipping," September)? Get real. People in the service industry make a living off tips. Tips pay for their kids' shoes. For good service and a clear conscience, just do this: Tip accordingly. If the service is especially good or bad, inform the management.

—JEFF CROSBY  
Austin, Tex.

### Belated But Deserved Credit

IN ONE DRAFT or another of my Letter from Little Rock in the June Esquire, I thanked Diane Blair, a professor of political science at the University of Arkansas, for writing *Arkansas Politics and Government*, as the book had served as a significant resource for my piece. Unfortunately, my written gratitude did not survive to the final version of the article, and for that I am heartily sorry.

GREGORY JAINES  
Savannah, Ga.

Letters to the editor should be mailed with your address and a return phone number to The Sound and the Fury, Esquire, 55 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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## BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE

**W**HEN DAVID LETTERMAN moved to the Ed Sullivan Theater a block away from the offices of Esquire, this little corner of the world suddenly became "Dave's Neighborhood." Now I just stop. I do, and tourists file out to get a quick photo of the *Late Show* marquee or a glimpse of the man himself—or, at the very least, his trusty sidekicks, souvenir store owners Mujibur and Sirajul. (For those who really enjoy looking at the boys, see page 96.) Windows are filled with Lettermaniana, as everyone tries to make a buck off his ever increasing popularity. (So why not us? we thought.)

With this much love for one man—not to mention a \$14 million salary—you'd think he'd be pretty happy with himself. Wrong. As senior writer **Bill Zehme** reveals in his article "Letterman Lets His Guard Down" (page 96), Dave may be the King of Late Night, but his head is extremely uneasy wearing the crown.

Zehme, who has known Letterman since he started his talk show in 1982, presents an unusually intimate portrait. "We're both midwesterners," says Zehme. "We're both sons of florists, and we both escaped the family business for pursuits where hands get as dirty as hearts." If that doesn't qualify Zehme as an expert on the Letterman psyche, consider that earlier this year, he hosted his own talk show on CNBC. "I'm comin' after his empire," says Zehme.

Letterman's *Late Show*, of course, is not the kind of TV that contributing editor **Pete Hamill** had in mind when considering the cultural suicide that America is committing ("Endgame," page 84). In this age of increasing vulgarity—in politics, entertainment, and sports—now could the end not be near? Hamill, whose most recent best seller, *A Drinking Life*, will be published in paperback in the spring, says that our only chance for salvation is "the natural swing back to common sense and civility. Otherwise, the alternatives exile."

Since it was first published in 1991, Pulitzer prize-winning journalist **Susan Faludi's** *Backlash* has become a landmark feminist text. Now Faludi is turning her attention to the "crisis in masculinity in America." Where better to begin than that age-old dilemma: Should boys play with dolls ("Guys and Dolls," page 104)? In chronicling the history of

G.I. Joe—and feminists will be delighted to learn that Faludi did not have a dreaded Barbie doll, and regularly played G.I. Joes with the neighborhood boys—Faludi presents the case that the doll offered boys "the only acceptable way to play house" and thus broke down gender roles. As for another World War II remnant that's a little closer to home, Faludi says that instead of "the death of G.I. Joe, I wish I were writing about the death of the Vargi Girl. She makes G.I. Joe look downright postmodern."

In "The Science Club Serves Its Country" (page 77), contributing editor **Chip Brown** tells the eerie story of a group of mentally handicapped boys who, in the early fifties, unwittingly ate cereal laced with radioactive isotopes as part of a nutrition experiment. Brown, who is writing a book on alternative healing and whose Esquire article on the murder of a gay sailor was nominated for a National Magazine Award last year—explores the ethics of such testing. But, as Brown says, "it's more important to understand what happened than to judge it." Either way, you'll never look at your oatmeal the same way again.

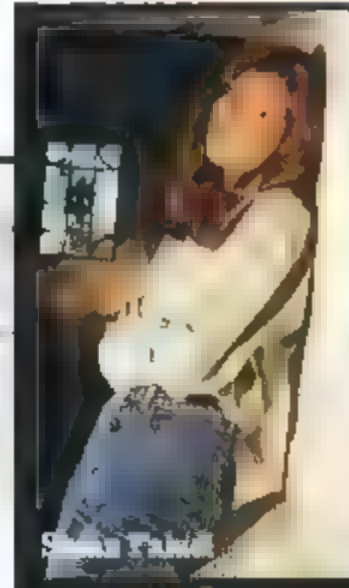
When contributing editor **Lynn Darling** arrived on the set of Jennifer Jason Leigh's upcoming film *Dolores Claiborne*, she blurred a line between fiction and reality that would make even Philip Roth proud ("Jennifer Jason Leigh Feels Your Pain," page 114). In the movie, Leigh, tragically, plays an Esquire writer. So how did the two magazines compare? "People bring you coffee," says Darling of the cinematic Esquire. "They dress better, and there's more sex in the office." Sounds like a great place to work.

"This is the Wild West of technology," says contributing editor **Phil Patton** of the information superhighway—or the way, as he calls it, Patton (along with assistance from Internet guide Brian Johnson), explores the "vehicles and the roadside culture" of the Internet in this month's Guide (page 13). The author of *Made in U.S.A.* (Penguin) and Esquire's automobile column, Patton can be reached (or flamed) at [pattonp@aol.com](mailto:pattonp@aol.com) or [pattonp@pep.com](mailto:pattonp@pep.com).

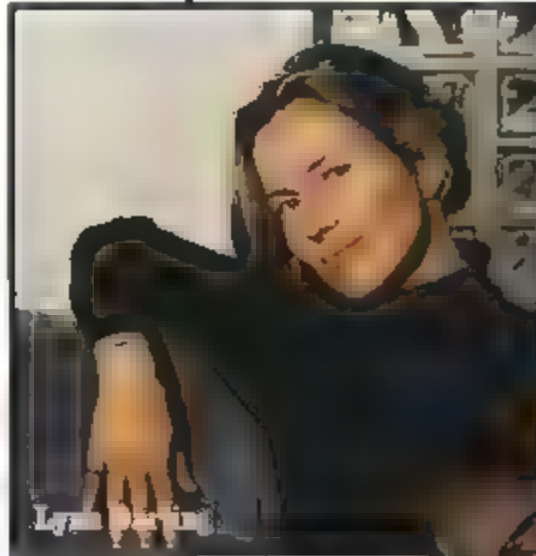
And finally, Mr. Peepers herself **Julie Baumgold**, has stepped out and will return shortly.



Pete Hamill



Chip Brown



Lynn Darling



Phil Patton





**GEORGIA:** *I finally went out to dinner with him last night.*

**JACKIE:** *Just the two of you? Where did you go?*

**GEORGIA:** *Mario's.*

**JACKIE:** *Mario's? The food is terrible.*

**GEORGIA:** *I didn't notice. I don't really even know what I ate.*

**JACKIE:** *Really?*

**GEORGIA:** *You should have seen him. He was so sweet. He spilled his wine all over my dress.*

**JACKIE:** *Adorable.*

**GEORGIA:** *And then when he reached over to give me his napkin, he knocked over his water glass.*

**JACKIE:** *Hilarious.*

**GEORGIA:** *Well, it was. We couldn't stop laughing. We just had to get out of there. We laughed all the way back to my place.*

**JACKIE:** *Your place?*

**GEORGIA:** *Well, I was soaked. And besides.*

**JACKIE:** *Besides.*

**GEORGIA:** *Did you ever notice how good he smells?*

**JACKIE:** *Frankly, no.*

**GEORGIA:** *He wears the most wonderful cologne.*

**JACKIE:** *Dare I ask what it is?*

**GEORGIA:** *Well, it comes in a box with dots.*

**JACKIE:** *Dots?*

**GEORGIA:** *Dots.*

**JACKIE:** *So. Now we're back at your place.*

**GEORGIA:** *Jackie, how's your mother?*

*Neiman Marcus*



**Herrera for Men**

**Carolina Herrera**  
New York

# Reality Check

## Parenting

### Make Room for Another Daddy

AS IF Woody Allen didn't have enough problems with his kids these days—he recently lost his custody appeal and **Mia Farrow** changed their names—now comes someone else who wants to take away his adopted daughter, **Dylan Farrow** (or Eliza, if you insist).

Carl Thomas Guichard Sr. of Jefferson, Louisiana, is claiming that Dylan, whom Farrow adopted in 1985 (Allen did not become her adoptive father until 1991), is his biological daughter, and he wants to get her back.

Guichard asserts that Dylan—or Karen Lynn Karkosky Guichard, as he calls her—was born to him and his common-law wife while he was serving time in a federal prison. He says his wife—who has avoided contact with Guichard since the birth—put the child up for adoption without his permission. The adoption records are sealed, Guichard says, but he insists that he has information confirming that Dylan is his, and he's asking for a DNA test to prove his claim.

But Woody and Mia aren't exactly negotiating visitation hours with Guichard yet, in fact, the FBI confirms that it has been called in to investigate the would-be father figure and his affairs. "He's a total impostor," says a representative from the Allen camp. "He's writing and badgering people."

"This whole thing has been a nightmare," says Guichard. "I have nothing against Mia Farrow, and it's great that she wants to adopt children. But that poor child looks miserable."



And they said it wouldn't last.

## Comedy

### Two Spotted Owls Walk into a Bar...

HARD AS IT IS to admit, **Al Gore** has been, well, funny lately. He's not quite ready for the Friars Club, but he's certainly improved his wacky image. The reason? It seems that Sneaky Gore and other potential Borscht Beltwayers have hired comic **Mark Katz** to write shtick for them.

Gore originally asked **Katz** to write "lame" jokes after he snapped his Achilles tendon, and he so enjoyed seeing signs

of life while he was talking that he kept Katz on.

Gore had no comment about his comic alter ego.



A million laughs.

Probably couldn't think of anything funny to say.

## Friendship

### Good Thing He Didn't Ring Dandy Don

IF YOU HAD just been charged with murdering your wife and her friend and were about to have the most visible trial in history, you might want to make nice with the head of a network news division, too. And that's just what **O. J. Simpson** did the day after he was arrested: he placed a call to ABC News president **Roone Arledge** on his private line. Arledge, who hired O. J. for a few forgettable seasons on *Monday Night Football*, initially thought the call was a hoax but soon recognized Simpson's voice.

"O. J. rambled for about forty-five min-

utes," says a source. "He didn't really talk about the murder. In fact, he was talking about Nicole as though she were still alive." The only thing he kept saying was that he didn't beat Nicole, which struck Roone as odd because the hearing [episodes] hadn't been revealed yet."



O. J., phone home?

## Girls! Girls! Girls!

### The Lesbian in the Rye?

FANS OF the literary stylings of **Howard Stern** should rejoice. The author is already plotting his next book. This time around,

Stern, whose recent memoir *Private Parts* was a huge best-seller, might change genres and write a novel about what else? lesbians. "The book's still untitled, and the plot is vague," says a publishing insider. "But it's about babes doing it with babes. It's in really bad taste. Vintage Stern." Not unless there's scratch-and-sniff.



The king of All Media enjoying the throne.

## Women! Women! Women!

### The Feminist Mistakes

GOOD thing **Simone de Beauvoir** isn't alive to see what feminists are doing to **Christina Hoff Sommers**. In her book *Who Stole Feminism?*, the Clark University professor argues that the number of stories about women's oppression is greatly exaggerated. Sommers, for example, writes that around 100 women die each year from anorexia, versus the figure of 150,000 often cited. "I thought that far-minded feminists would say, 'Hey, we better be more careful,'" she says. "But they're going on the offense."

The American Association of University Women is urging members to write articles attacking Sommers. The group has set up a toll-free number; members can call and get tips before going into battle. And when Sommers appeared with **Connie Chung** on CBS's *Eye to Eye*, **Gloria Steinem** and **Patricia Ireland** led a lobbying effort to convince the network to cancel the segment. Says Sommers, "I thought only the people who do wheat germ studies got this defensive." No word yet on the wheat germ hot line.

## What Rhymes with Transubstantiation?



ASSUME FOR A second that you are **Harold Bloom**, and you can include only one of the following poets in your next canon. Do you choose His Holiness, **Pope John Paul II**, or his holier-than-thou-ness, **Jimmy Carter**? As the pope's recently published volume, *The Place Within*, and Carter's forthcoming collection, *Always a Reckoning*, reveal, each is quite the bard. Herewith, a primer:

## CARTER

**Literary antecedent:** Dylan Thomas, "whose phrases touch me in a special way"

**Holy place that inspires him:** Plains, Georgia

**Holy ritual that inspires him:** The planting of a peanut

**When he writes about "mother," he really means...** Miss Lillian

**Most lyrical title:** "Why We Get Cheaper Tires from Liberia"

**Probably at work on an ode to:** Yannick Cédras

## THE POPE

**Literary antecedent:** T. S. Eliot, who has finally met his match, Catholically speaking

**Holy place that inspires him:** The Mount of Olives

**Holy ritual that inspires him:** The sacrament of confirmation

**When he writes about "mother," he really means...** The Virgin Mary

**Most lyrical title:** "Schizoid"

**Probably at work on an ode to:** Sonny Mehta

Now that you're an expert in their respective oeuvres, a pop quiz. Which of the two poets wrote each of the following?

- 1) All those at war / Pray to obtain / God's blessing / It's with those in pain.
- 2) Listen, the even knocking of hammers, / so much their own, / I project onto the people / to test the strength of each blow.
- 3) History lays down events over the struggle of conscience. Victories throb inside this layer, and defeats. History does not cover them. It makes them stand out.
- 4) We chosen few are truly blessed. / It's clear God does not want us pained / by those who suffer far away / Are we to doubt what He ordained?

# Reality Check

## Manners

### Talk Dirty to Her

**N**O ONE ever accused **Judith Regan** of being demure. The former Simon & Schuster editor and current **Rupert Murdoch** mogul has recently been taping segments for *Full Disclosure*, a Fox TV "investigative" show that will go up against *Oz*. Staffers say—though Regan calls it a "ridiculous lie"—that during one interview she embarrassed a

guest by sharing intimate details of her gynecological history and messy marital breakup. "Things got really extraneous," says a source, when Regan played an audiotape of her young daughter crying when her ex-husband came by for a visit. "The subjects are so shocked that they start blabbing about their own lives." Can't you just feel **Mike Wallace** trembling now?

## Talent Competitions

### S-S-Somebody S-S-Stop Him!

**A**S FURTHER proof that America's answer to **Jerry Lewis**—**Jim Carrey**—has a shocking amount of clout in Hollywood, we offer this cautionary tale. Executives at New Line Cinema were enjoying the success of their sleeper hit *Spinning the Monkey* when its writer-director **David Russell**, announced that he was taking his next movie to another studio, Miramax. This came as quite a shock to New Line, since Russell's wife was New Line East Coast production chief **Janet Grillo**, and it was assumed they had a lock on Russell's next script. "New Line

chairman **Robert Shaye** was livid," says a source. "He was saying, 'His wife works for us—it should be our film, and then things got mighty tense.'"

When Russell's agents at United Talent heard about the turmoil, says the source, they reminded the studio that UTA controls other New Line projects, notably *The Mask II*, an upcoming Jim Carrey film. Shaye wouldn't budge, says the source, and the standoff wasn't resolved until Grillo resigned and the incident blew over New Line and



Are Ventura in the hole?

UTA deny the story, and Grillo, who says she left to take care of her infant son, refuses to comment on the situation further, saying, "It's a private matter."

Or the makings of an **Altman** film.

### Death Is Not an Option

A monthly parlor game

**Yannick Cédras** or **Rosalynn Carter**?

**Mugsy Bogues** or **Dennis Rodman**?

**Burt Reynolds** or **Dom DeLuise**?

**Arianna Huffington** or **Dianne Feinstein**?

**Michael Bolton** or **Kenny G**?

**Freddy Krueger** or **Jason**?

**Tupac Shakur** or **Flavor Flav**?

**John Madden** or **Dan Dierdorf**?

**Mary Matalin** or **James Carville**?



Would he do *that*?

### Paraphrased by the Dashboard Light?

**H**AS **Meat Loaf** taken the words right out of somebody's mouth? According to a recent lawsuit filed by Wisconsin songwriter **Jordan Sage**, that's just what Meat Loaf did with "Objects in the Rearview Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear." Meat Loaf would not comment on the case, but Sage's lyrics (which a forensic expert said were written at least four years ago) do bear more than a passing resemblance to Meat's 1993 hit. Probably just a coincidence, though.

#### SAGE'S VERSION:

##### FIRST VERSE

The skies were pure, the fields so green,  
The sun shined brighter than it's ever been.  
I grew up with my best friend  
He was the brother I never had.

##### SAMPLE FROM CHORUS

But it was long ago and far away,  
oh, God, it seems so far,  
and if life is just a highway—  
then the soul is just a car.  
Objects in the rearview mirror  
are closer than they appear.

#### MEAT LOAF'S VERSION:

##### FIRST VERSE

The skies were pure and the fields were green,  
and the sun was brighter than it's ever been.  
When I grew up with my best friend **Kenny**,  
We were close as any brothers that you ever knew.

##### SAMPLE FROM CHORUS

But it was long ago and it was far away,  
oh, God, it seems so very far,  
And if life is just a highway—  
then the soul is just a car.  
And objects in the rearview mirror  
may appear closer than they are.



Lord & Taylor  
Foley's  
Robinsons-May  
Hecht's  
Kaufmann's  
Filene's  
Famous Barr  
I. S. Ayres  
Meier & Frank

# MAN AT HIS BEST

EDITED BY ANITA LECLERC



**Museum phone:** In five colors.

## DESIGN

### Phone Sexy

CICENA's telephone by Smart Design has already entered the collection of New York's Cooper Hewitt, the Smithsonian museum dedicated to the history of design. This is appropriate, since it can be read as a graceful essay on the cumulative history of telephone design. Like a Miata,

with its soft, subtle reference to the classic British sports car, the Cicena (\$24.95) harks back to the days before Henry Dreyfuss's rugged models for Ma Bell. The handset is shaped for casual use. Resembling a soft barbell, it is one of the few phones that are as happy sandwiched between shoulder and ear as grasped in the hand. Think of it as a sports phone, by analogy with sports car: recalling the days when telephoning at leisure was new and exciting, when the standard phone was still a crank box on the wall, and the desktop model an exotic and slightly racy import known as "the French telephone."

**Eastern star:** Who says the twain shall never meet?



## FILM

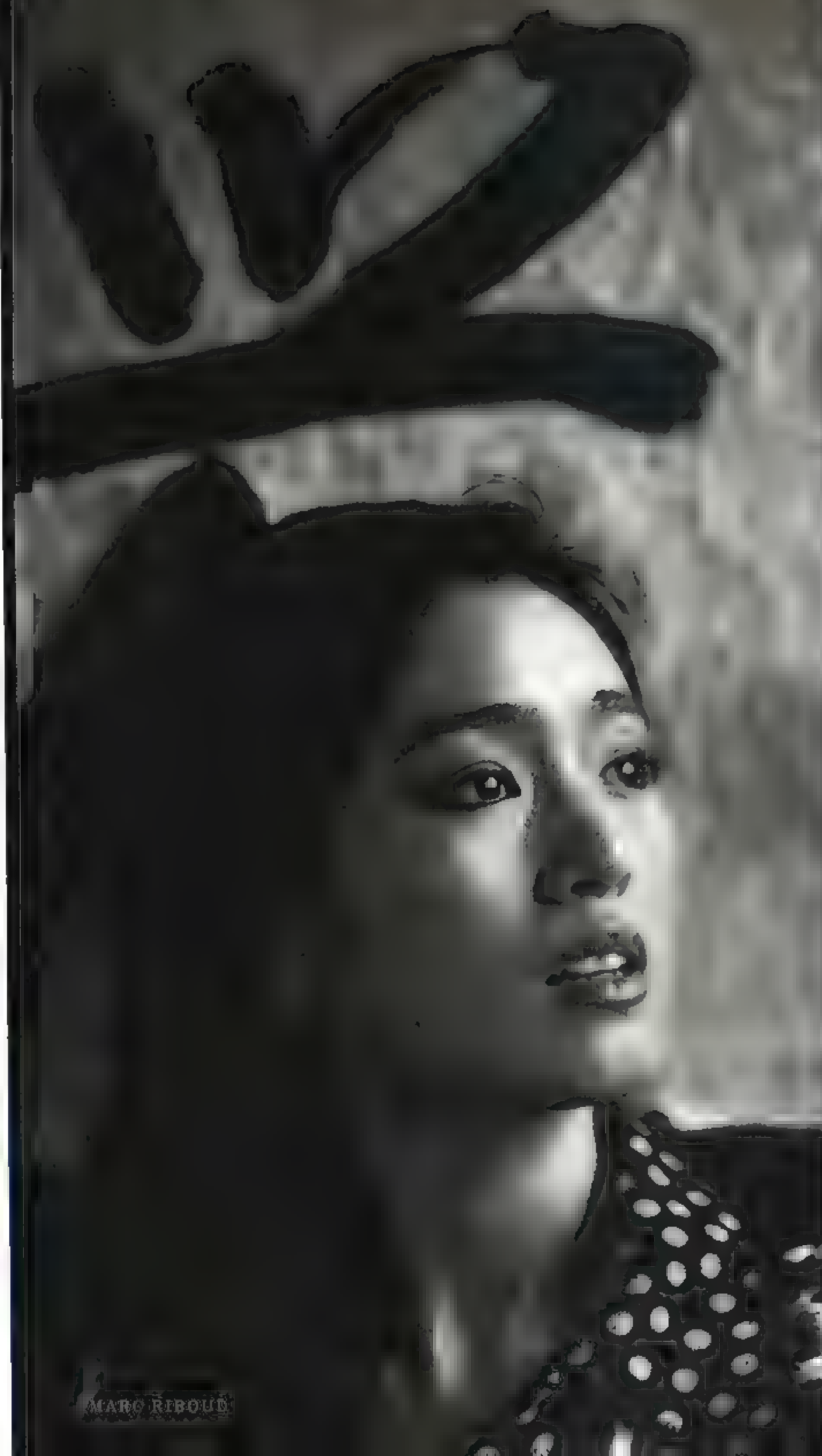
### Raise the Red Curtain

GIVEN CHINA's population of 1.2 billion, Gong Li may be, fan for fan, the most popular actor in the world. In this country, her name recognition lags somewhere behind Sharon Stone's, but as the lovely, doomed lead in two Chinese movies that were certified art-house hits, *Raise the Red Lantern* and *Farewell My Concubine*, she made an impression—even earning that supreme Western accolade, inclusion as one of *People* magazine's Most Beautiful People. Gong Li has become our guide, seductive in her tragedy, to the spectacular cruelties of Chinese life in the twentieth century. Despairing over her dead love in *Ju Dou*, she immolates

herself, betrayed by her husband in *Concubine*, she hangs herself, in *Red Lantern* her husband-master drives her mad.

"I think there are dark aspects to any culture and skeletons to be found in any country's history," says Gong Li, mounting a sort of national defense via translated fax. In China, however, the skeletons are rattling still. The government has blocked the release there of *To Live*, her latest film with the director Zhang Yimou, and furthermore has shut down the pair's current project.

Whether they like it or not, they've always been a couple that attracted attention. Six years ago, Gong Li was an acting student when Zhang, then as now China's most eminent director, left his wife and child for her



Since then, they have created a body of work so celebrated that in Beijing they must live in semiseclusion (so many people, so few celebrities), changing residences frequently.

If the intensity of their collaboration is undiminished, the work itself has changed its spots. In earlier films like *Red Lantern*, the director liked to work at an icy remove, setting off Gong Li's expressive, almost childlike emotions with highly stylized, exquisitely colored backdrops (lots and lots of red), an aesthetic that probably struck Westerners as reassuringly inscrutable. In *To Live*, Zhang drops the easel to become a rather sly folklorist with a tale about a determinedly ordinary family trying to keep itself alive during the frantic decades of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. "The movie demonstrates that people can retain their optimism and their dignity by surviving despite the odds," Gong Li says, "and by surviving, they ultimately triumph."

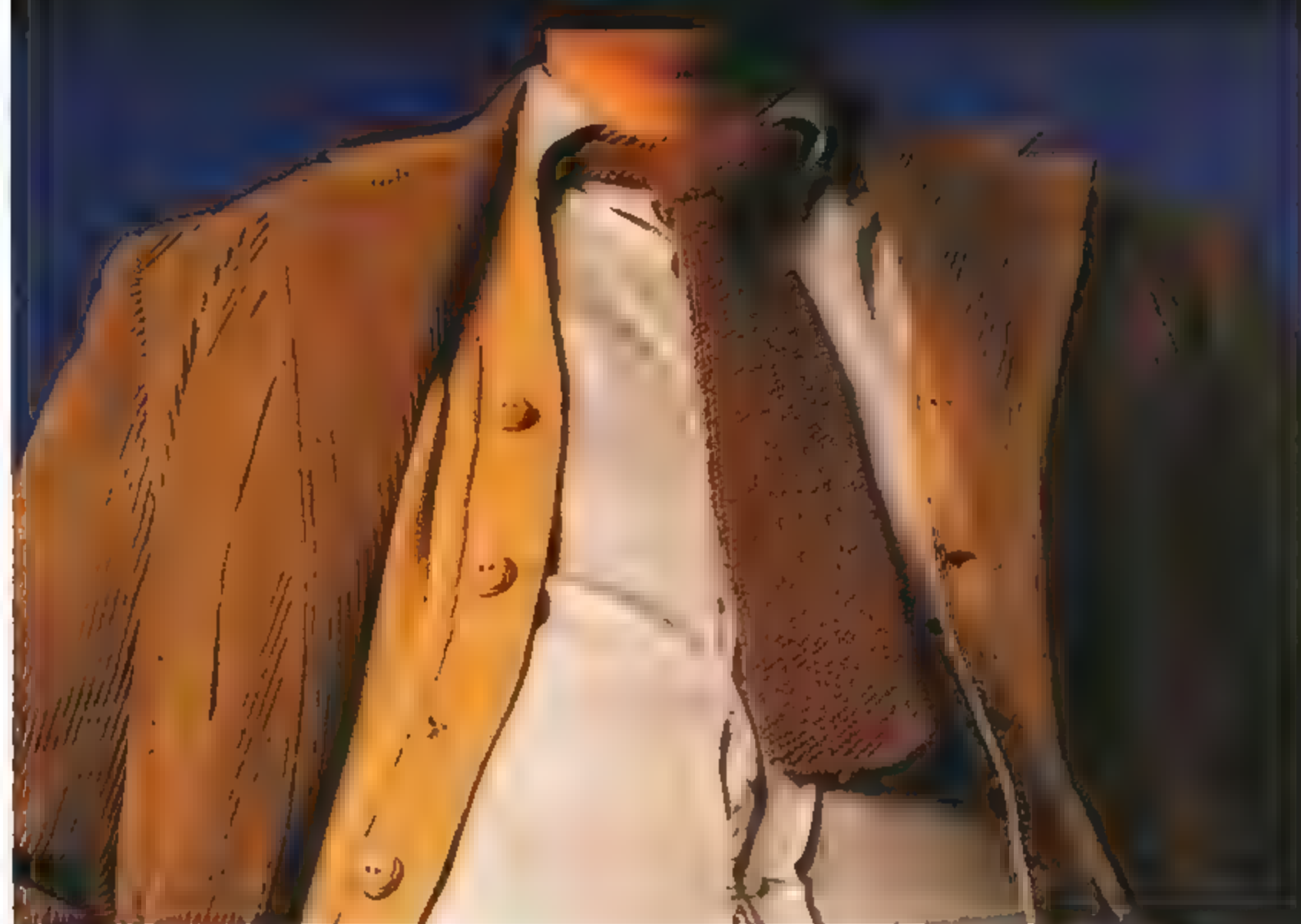
At twenty-eight, Gong Li has become a movie star of Western proportions even in a literal sense, her angular face and athletic, voluptuous frame closer to the Western ideal of female beauty than to the plumper, more demure Chinese one. If, at the start of her career, the shy, provincial actress was regarded as Zhang's Pygmalion-like creation, today she can exhibit a willfulness reminiscent of her diva roles, and the Chinese media have taken to wondering, if the pair were ever to split, who would be lost without whom?

—JOSEPH HOOPER

**Gong Li:** She's China's first international film star.

# Your body's a temple

and judging from your clothing,  
it's a cheap little joint on the outskirts of town.



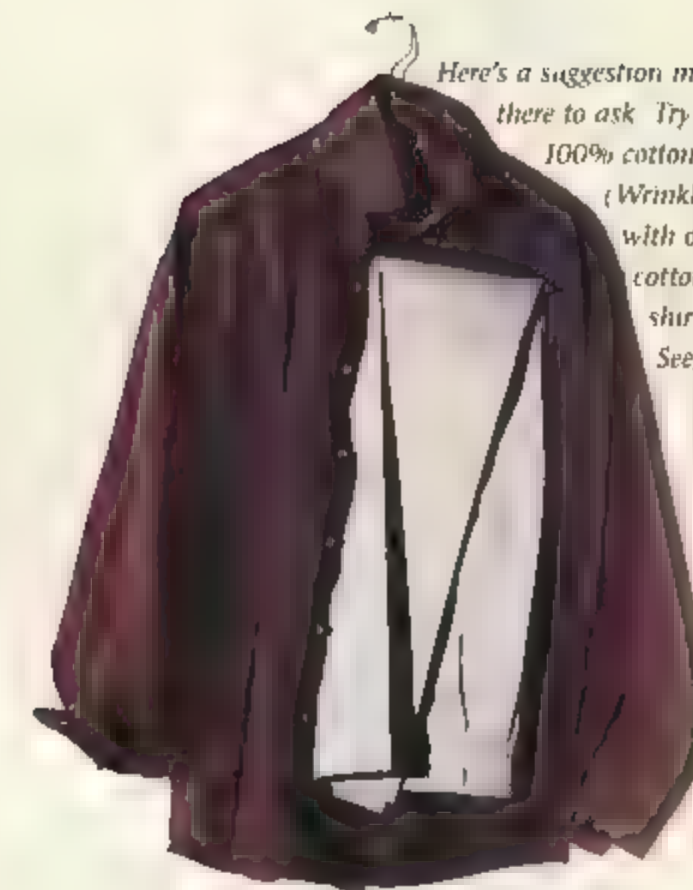
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*Pictured here is a 100% wool  
City Casuals jacket, about \$125,  
with a pair of 100% cotton  
Wrinkle-Free khakis, about \$45,  
and a 100% cotton shirt, around  
\$38. Your mother would be  
proud. Shocked, but proud.*

HAGGAR  
**Stuff**  
you can wear.

**I'm**  
**damn well gonna wear what I want.**  
Honey, what do I want?



*Here's a suggestion in case your wife isn't  
there to ask. Try a pair of Loose Fit  
100% cotton khakis, about \$42  
(Wrinkle-Free, of course),  
with one of our 100%  
cotton twill Wrinkle-Free  
shirts, about \$38.  
See, you can dress yourself*

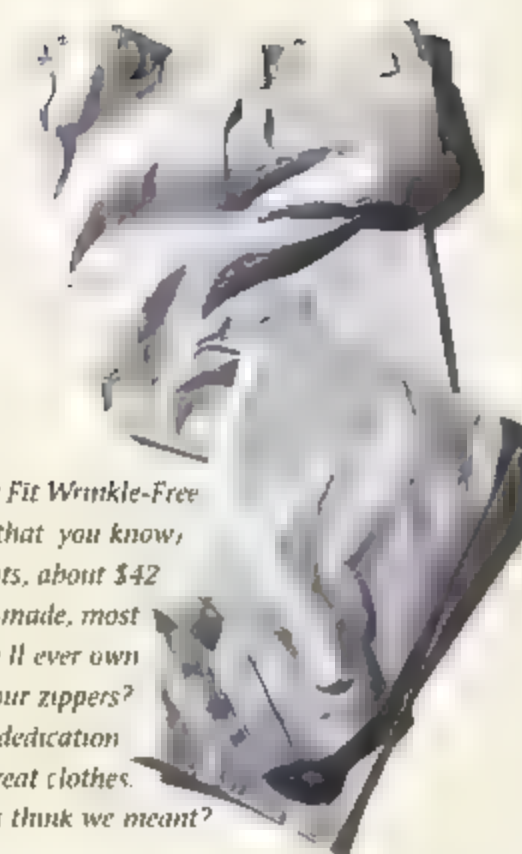
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A zipper is a **zipper.**  
Unless of course, you consider what's behind it.

HAGGAR  
**Stuff**  
you can wear.



Here's a pair of Loose Fit Wrinkle-Free  
(we invented that you know,  
100% cotton plain front pants, about \$42  
These are the best-made, most  
comfortable pants you'll ever own  
So what's behind every one of our zippers?  
About 70 years of dedication  
to the art of making great clothes.  
What'd you think we meant?

COMEDY

# Keenen's Way

**T**HE QUESTION WAS how come white people like him so much, and Keenen Ivory Wayans—he of the Isaac Hayes subtleties and Velázquez goatee—is spitting up his risotto

"It's just because they like what I do," the thirty-six-year-old former stand-up comic laughs. "It has nothing to do with me being a nicer Negro than the next guy I always hear how racist the white public is. I've never believed that. If something makes you laugh, you're not gonna go, 'Uh-oh, can't watch that. He's black.' If you just do what you do, an audience finds you."

They found him, big-time, on the Fox network, delivering Sunday evenings from the ennui of Cabot Cove and recycled James Bond movies. As high priest of *In Living Color*, Wayans led a congregation of spin-off talent—Jim Carrey, David Alan Grier, his brother Damon—into holy send-up and the promised land of solid Nielsen ratings. When Fox decided to rerun *In Living Color* on Thursdays, Wayans walked away from the show he had created. "The hardest thing I've ever done," he maintains, "but staying would've meant condoning what they were doing."

Now he's back, playing a down-at-the-heels shamus with some old scores to settle in a new action comedy, *A Low Down Dirty Shame*. The question begs: Did Wayans, who not only stars in but also wrote and directed the Joe Roth (newly anointed as chairman of Disney Pictures) production, ever lose his trademark cool?

"I have a philosophy about problems," he whispers. "Fix the ones you can fix, and fuck the rest." Amen. —MICHAEL ANGELI



**Laughs last:** Keenen Ivory Wayans is everybody's nice guy but nobody's fool

TIMOTHY WHITE

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"To

write

is to

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to write is to write is

to write is to write."

Sortudo: Stein

**MONTBLANC**

THE ART OF WRITING

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## NEW WRITING

# Fond Objects

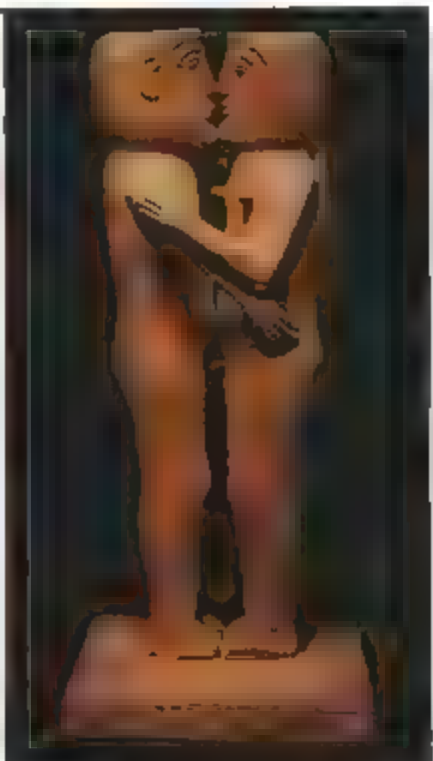
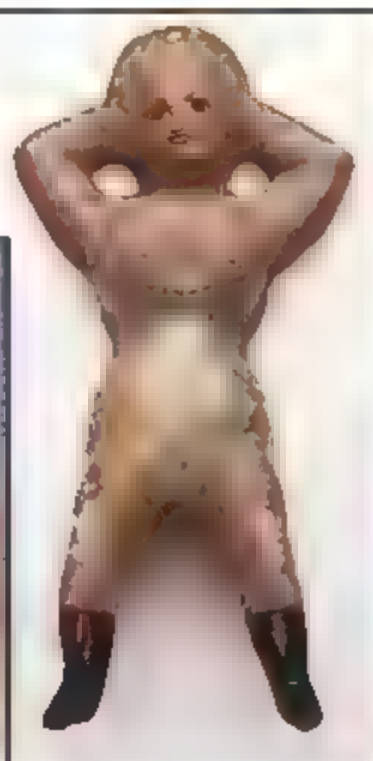
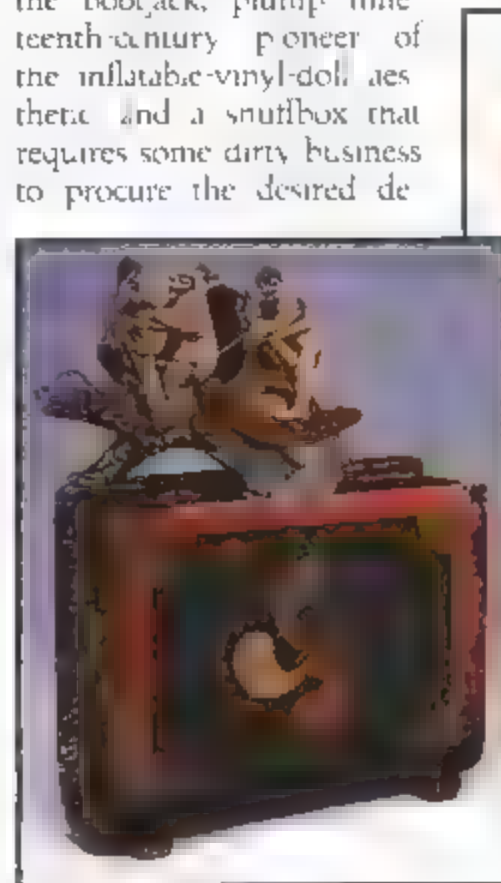
**J**USTICE Potter Stewart said he knew obscenity when he saw it, even if he couldn't define it. Browsing Milton Simpson's diverse sampler of "centuries of erotic Americana," *Folk Erotica* (HarperCollins), one wonders which images the good judge would single out for his index of opprobrium.

These lumpy fetish objects of desire, neither airbrushed nor depilated, toned, or siliconed, are sexuality as it was fashioned before, or outside, the age of mechanical reproduction, as it were. There are pictograms of vanished peoples, and prison and "outsider" art. There are everyday objects—the carved ice fishing rod, or "juggle stick," that gives its name a

new twist. Naughty Nellie the bootjack, plump nineteenth-century pioneer of the inflatable-vinyl-doll aesthetic, and a snuffbox that requires some dirty business to procure the desired de-

posit between cheek and gam. Our agricultural heritage is registered in matter of fact bestiality, and ears of corn are deftly employed sexual activity, most of it enigmatically clumsy—comes in pack in the box, copulations and peckaboo disclosures.

But the most powerful images are often the simple static ones, which suggests that Justice Stewart was on the wrong track, or the right one, depending on how you look at it. They're the images that carry the static charge of desire's eternal hum. **A**



**Charged images:** Pop-out kinetic book sculpture, circa 1840; Naughty Nellie bootjack, *Adon and Eve*, 1975

# How We Got Skunked

**B**EFORE the Gulf war began, the general sentiment among U.S. pilots in Saudi Arabia was "I sure hope to God that Stealth shit works." Then they began to find the bats, the ones that showed up each morning dead on the floors of the hangars, their sonar fooled by the faceted shapes of the planes just as radar would be, and they believed.

The success of the Stealth fighter, the star of the Nintendo air war over Iraq, put it up there with the longbow and repeating rifle as a military breakthrough. Now the man behind the plane tells how it came to be. In *Skunk Works: A Personal Memoir of My Years with Lockheed* (Little Brown),

Ben Rich, who headed up Lockheed's secret Skunk Works unit, explains how an obscure footnote in an obscure Soviet scientific paper turned into one of the strangest-looking objects ever to fly. The CIA cut out one chapter of his book, Rich says, and the NSA another, but he was allowed to reveal that for years Stealth pilots had practice bombed America in the dark, targeting a boathouse in Wisconsin and high rises in Cleveland. "We could find Mrs. Smith's rooming house and take out the northeast corner guest room

above the garage," he boasts. But it was not until the Gulf war that the pilots got to go after real targets: nuclear research centers, command bunkers, and the press. Saddam had allowed Peter Arnett of CNN, whose coverage wasn't much appreciated by the Air Force, to use Baghdad's phone center. The switchboard went on the target list, and one night in the ready rooms at King Khalid Air Force Base in Saudi Arabia, off-duty pilots waited expectantly for the Nighthawk to hit the switchboard. Watching CNN, they counted down the seconds until right on schedule their screen suddenly went to a roaring gray and a cheer broke out. **A**

F-117A Nighthawk



"Thought

that can merge wholly

into feeling, feeling that

can merge wholly

into thought =

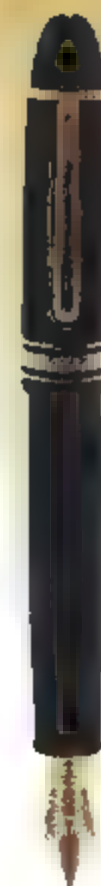
these are the

artist's

highest

joy."

Thomas Mann



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# TRAVEL

## Taos in Snow

**I**F YOU LIVE closed in by walls, by buildings—the wide-open mesas and plains of New Mexico can draw you like a narcotic. Which is why you might decide to drive the 150 “pass with care” miles from Albuquerque to Taos rather than hop on Edelweiss Air’s eight-seat Cessna 207 and cut by two thirds your travel time to Hotel Edelweiss, high in the

chorizo hotter green chiles, and a mountain range of bloodred *carne adovada*, whose heat is relieved only by a dab of Bosque honey, waiting on every table. On the road, you watch man-o-war thunderheads dump their cartoon rain on the backs of faraway ridges stippled with piñon. It will be snowing in the mountains.

In the town of Española, the snow of early winter lies lightly on the bleached chartreuse grasses, the pink scars of the arroyos, the wat-

Taos is built on sediment only a few hundred thousand years old, newborn by geologic standards. But the town feels ancient. It’s no surprise that the nearby Taos Pueblo is the longest-inhabited structure in North America—can you see it over the tour buses?

Taos itself is sweet and hushed, its circuitous streets clearly organically grown

ace pilot, designed the hotel’s stellar computer systems and founded its private airline, the virtues of which you now fully appreciate. Tim, a veteran resort manager and exalted chef, basically runs the joint. His wife, Ann-Marie, a Swiss-raised pastry chef of the highest order, inspires guests to get in their daily licks on the mountain or start looking like the Trapp family with gland problems.

After a dinner of consommé of orzo and oysters, macadamia crusted fresh Florida grouper (flown in by Chris), and white-chocolate-and-raspberry crème brûlée, you sleep like a burrito rolled up in your goose-down duvet.

You awake thrilled by the happy swoosh of Edelweiss guests sking down to the chairlift a hundred yards away, and by the hot sugar-butter scent of Ann-Marie’s famous coffee cake. You wander around, admiring the new sauna, the



They take the route of the human foot curious, indirect, edging toward anything interesting. Found objects shimmer with mystery. You go crazy over a \$40 O’Keefe-esque ram’s skull and a \$150 museum-quality Navajo pipe as long as your arm. Fearing for gas money, you talk the owner of the back-alley Old Taos shop out of a big green papier-mâché trout for 40 percent off, then high-tail it up the mountain as the Taos cloud works do a Maxfield Parrish on-acid imitation behind your back.

Taos Ski Village is hopping, and the Edelweiss is part of it. The handwork of the brothers Wooldridge glows in the dark. Chris, a software entrepreneur and

new restaurant, the old fireplace with its ever-roaring fire, then take your coffee cake and excellent coffee outside on the wide new sundeck while the clouds build and bend above you across a sky as blue as the eye of the first Spanish conqueror who stole this pink and lilac land from the people who, fortunately, still get to live here.

—JESSICA MAXWELL

**F**or reservations at Hotel Edelweiss and shuttle service to Taos on Edelweiss Air, call 800-458-8754. One-week winter packages cost \$1,320 per person, double occupancy, breakfast and dinner included.



### North by Southwest:

The Taos Pueblo, America’s oldest dwelling; Hotel Edelweiss; the Taos Ski Valley.

alpine heart of the Taos Ski Valley. The thirty-year-old establishment has recently been taken over by the brothers Chris and Tim Wooldridge, who are hell-bent on turning the Edelweiss into a midmountain Euro-flower worthy of both its name and the complex logistics of transporting oneself to the northern edge of the true Southwest.

Before leaving Albuquerque, you might fortify yourself at Perea’s with fat New Mexican pinto beans, hot



tile fences, and the round shoulders of the pueblo-style office buildings that look as if people were making tortillas inside, not selling insurance. Snow collects even on the crimson tips of the *chiles rellenos* strung from the eaves of roadside vegetable stands.

If you tune to 530 AM, Ricardo Montalban will inform you over and over that the highway taking you into



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ever sees things as

they really are. If

he did he would cease

to be an artist."

Oscar Wilde

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## RESTAURANTS

John Mariani

# Hawaiian Munch

**H**AWAII IS ONE of those rare places on earth where the natural beauty is so encompassing that the addition of fine restaurants seems almost too much to ask. Yet even in Eden, Adam and Eve were on the lookout for tempting food. Happily, a young crew of homeboys and immigrant chefs has been busy transforming this once dreary dining scene, creating a thoroughly modern Hawaiian cuisine based on the produce of specialized farms and the bounty of the Pacific. So if you're headed for paradise, here are some places where the food matches the scenery.

### Way Beyond Pupu Platters

Japanese-born, Hawaiian-bred, and French-trained, Alan Wong is a hybrid incarnation of Hawaii's various food cultures. And at the **CanoeHouse** at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel (1 Mauna Lani Drive, Kohala Coast, the Big Island, 808/885-6622), he demonstrates that he may be the most versatile of the islands' young chefs. Highlights of his marvelous menu include kalua-pig quesadilla with Hawaiian chile-pepper sour cream and minted mango, Thai black-rice-lobster cake with fresh water-chestnut-and-tomato salsa, roast opakapaka with Thai curry sauce and crispy Chinese noodles, and litchi-ginger sorbet. The CanoeHouse itself is open to the ocean, and you can feel hear, and smell those trade winds Jack London called



**In lieu of Inau:** The CanoeHouse; curried opakapaka with Chinese noodles; litchi-ginger sorbet

the "long, balmy sighs of a world at rest."

### The Big Kahuna

Sam Choy, all three hundred pounds of him, is to Hawaiian food what Paul Prudhomme is to Cajun: an ebullient creator and propagator of his region's native cooking, which he serves up at a bare-bones eatery called **Sam Choy's Restaurant** (355-6 Kaulahala Street, Kailua-Kona, the Big Island, 260-1545). When Choy worked in the islands' posh resorts, he saw that Hawaiian kitchen workers often ate better than the guests, so he began serving in-your-face dishes: "hangover" fish soup with sweet potatoes, breadfruit, and ginger; pigs'-feet soup with wild mushrooms, mustard cabbage, and peanuts; honeyed duck with Ka'u orange sauce; and Kaloko steak with grilled Maui onions.

For breakfast, there's French toast made with Hawaiian sweet bread or pork fried rice with scrambled eggs, all washed down with rich Kona coffee.

### Somewhere Out There

The **Hahimaile General Store**

Monday—a locals' night—when the place gets a real glow on.

### The Skinny on Maui

Few chefs in Hawaii have devoted as much energy to ferreting out Maui's best "up country" provender as has Kathleen Daelemans of the **Cafe Kula** at the Grand Wailea Resort (3850 Wailea Alanui Drive, Wailea, Maui, 875-1234), incorporating it into nutritionally correct spa menus with amazing grace. She does as little as possible to her ingredients, and the result is an explosion of pure flavors and pleasing textures: basmati-rice torta with tender

grilled vegetables in a tomato-and-basil sauce, spicy black bean chili served with corn bread, and mango salsa chicken.

breast grilled over kaawe wood with Maui onions, and a luscious fruit tart of mango, star fruit, and kiwi in an oatmeal crust. **R**

### Getting a Buzz In

**M**aui has whole squadrons of nice, comfortable helicopters to take you around the islands, but for something a lot more adventurous and a hell of a lot more fun, loop your way into the Haleakala volcano crater and buzz the windsurfers off Paia in a reproduction of a 1935 red WACO biplane flown by Wayne Wagner of Biplane Barnstormers (Kahului Airport, Kahului, 808-878-2860). The rate is \$300 an hour.



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## OUR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Walter Shapiro

# The Love Boat



**Be like Ike?** The pulpit looks mighty good, but a campaign might just convince Powell to leave the presidency to the professionals.

The press and the pollsters are already onboard for '96, but Colin Powell may not be going anywhere

THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL candidate I felt head over heels in love with was Jimmy Carter during the 1976 primaries. I was so besotted with the image of this born-again Georgian—a military man, a racial healer, a welfare reformer who promised “a government as good as the American people”—that in full swoon I actually went to work for him. I was going through a messy divorce at the time, so at least I had a good excuse for my misplaced political passion. But little did I imagine that I was helping set in motion the historical forces that would someday encourage General Raoul Cédras to teach Carter's Sunday-school class in Plains, where presumably this misunderstood Haitian patriot will testify on the Christian use of tire irons.

I offer up this autobiographical snippet as a cautionary tale for those contemporary political seekers who are looking for love in all the wrong places. Shrinks call the process

“transference.” Historians dub it “the man on horseback,” a sobriquet used to describe Ulysses S. Grant. *Newsweek* anointed it “The Powell Scenario” in an October cover story, with the subhead “Will Col. Powell Run for President?” But no matter how you interpret these symptoms, they represent a desperate longing for a charismatic hero to lead America in a rousing chorus of “Amazing Grace” as we all march arm in arm toward the millennium.

What's going on here? When did we start rollin' with Col. instead of hoping for a thrill with Bill? How, in a few short weeks, was General Powell transformed from a bit player in the Carter peace-pipe playlet in Port-au-Prince into the second coming of Dwight Eisenhower?

The parallels between Eisenhower and Powell are eerie. As Eisenhower biographer Stephen Ambrose writes, “Democrats as well as Republicans found it easy to assume that a man as smart as Eisenhower must be a member of their party.” This was the Ike of 1948, an apolitical tabula rasa whose public views were more closely guarded than Stalin's dacha. So it is with Powell today. His speeches are moving—whether to mass audiences (standard fee: \$500,000) or to an elite group of businessmen recently convoked by investment banker Ted Forstmann in Aspen—but they are artfully devoid of political specifics. The general's first cousin, businessman Bruce Llewellyn (“I have the money in the family, Colin has the name”), hints that Powell would never run as a Republican after the racial politics of the Reagan Bush years. Weigh that against Richard Armitage, a former Reagan-era defense official and Powell's closest friend, who says, “I know he's an independent.” I asked Armitage to respond to a Peggy Noonan epigram: “It's the wrong time in history for a big-government liberal Republican. But it's the right time for a back Republican.” Armitage's carefully calibrated answer: “General Powell has indicated to me that he's fiscally conservative.”

This is politics by way of the Oracle at Delphi: cryptic statements that allow true believers to construct an idealized President Powell in their own image. This mystical faith meshes perfectly with the psychological needs of political Washington: that tiny inbred community of pundits, pollsters, and packagers who are beginning to descend on Iowa a year before the first 1996 caucuses. For all the world-weary cynicism they project on television, political junkies are, in truth, jaded romantics. They gravitated to politics as young acolytes after reading *Advice and Consent*, thrilling to a Kennedy campaign or simply watching one too many breathless election-night telecasts. They are a flock of charismatics waiting for the divine light: modern-day crusaders perpetually questing after the Holy Grail of the perfect president.

For these political pilgrims, the 1996 campaign before Powell seemed to hold all the promise of a Bruce Willis film



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retrospective. Begin with the cocktail party verdict trumpeted on every talk show by the Washington put-down police—that Bill Clinton is a flawed vessel unworthy of chthonic dreams. Dismiss the likely 1996 Republican field, dominated by such grim figures as Bob Dole and Phil Gramm, as too right-wing and too socially retrograde to justify any romantic flirtation. Thus the moment was ripe for political Washington to lapse into a *Field of Dreams* fantasy, an if-you-build-it-he-will-run draft movement for Powell.

The media nurture the illusion that they merely respond to public sentiment, so the Powell boomlet, of course, begins with a poll. "We wanted to see how a hero, a nonpolitical figure, would test against Clinton," explains Times Mirror Center pollster Andrew Kohut. In the center's survey in late July, Powell blew the president out of the water 51 to 41 percent. "There's an important distinction between Powell's personal support and his political support," cautions Kohut. "As soon as he says, 'I'm a Democrat' or 'I'm a Republican,' he will lose significant support."

Such subtleties were lost as soon as Haiti offered the media the lens to magnify these inchoate sentiments. U.S. troops were still unloading their meal-ready-to-eat rations when *New York Times* Washington bureau chief R. W. Apple was on the front page hailing Powell as a "hot political commodity." Apple's evidence: a handful of sure-we-re-intrigued Republican quotes and that Times Mirror poll. *The Wall Street Journal* fed this media bonfire with its own late-September poll, revealing that Powell was now virtually president-elect as he whopped Clinton 49 to 34 percent. *Newsweek* then published its well-crafted Powell cover by columnist Joe Klein, an early Clinton cheerleader turned sad-eyed skeptic. From there, the flames of this draft-Powell crusade grew higher, now fueled by newspaper op-ed pages and the TV talk shows.

The speculation feeds on itself, partly because the notion of a black president is undeniably uplifting. At a time when political leaders have abandoned all pretense that they have a formula to lessen racial polarization, a Powell presidency seems like a gift from the gods, a balm after years of malign neglect. "The election of Colin

Powell would say to blacks, 'It's our country, too,'" speculates University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Elijah Anderson, a leading black social thinker. "He could buy time and provide a long fuse instead of a short fuse in the inner city." Critics of affirmative action can take comfort in Powell's career as the product of two great color-blind meritocracies: New York's pre-open-admissions City College and the U.S. Army. The general's statesmanlike persona serves as a potent rebuke to *The Bell Curve*, the recent right-wing screed by Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, which tries to give academic gloss to tindery musings on genetic inferiority. Moreover, in place of the shopworn Jesse Jackson (still, according to polls, the most admired figure among black Americans), Powell would offer mainstream America a safe and reassuring vehicle to express its tolerance.

**B**UT THE POWELL fantasy is far more likely to be remembered as a classic case of media mass psychosis than as a realistic blueprint for 1996. Eisenhower captured the essential truth when he wrote in a 1947 letter to a friend, "No man since Washington has been elected to political office unless he definitely desired it." For all its beguiling charms, the Powell dreamscape is enveloped in a daunting series of "probably won'ts." Powell probably won't run in 1996. If he does run, he probably won't win the GOP nomination. And, if he's elected, his record suggests that he probably won't be a transcendent president.

Now for the inherent flaw in these predictions: There is a chance that Powell is feeding the draft frenzy. (That's what Ike did in 1952, when he grudgingly decided to run.) "Things don't happen with him by accident," says a former Republican defense official, who is critical of Powell's machinations. "He's a very calculating guy." But, for the moment, the general's cover story seems airtight. He is committed to Random House (to the tune of \$6.5 million) to deliver his memoirs next spring, with a book tour slated for fall 1995.

Those closest to him talk as if Cincinnati were a ward healer compared with the self-effacing Powell. Lewellyn suggests that what his cousin craves is an appointive post like secretary of state, not the hurly-burly of a political cam-

paign. Armitage, who talks with Powell every day, radiates coyness when asked about the general's long-term plans. "If he were to ask me as a friend whether he should run, I'd say no," Armitage explains. "If he were to ask me who would make the best president, I would give him a different answer."

Let's pretend that Powell is toying with the idea of moving directly from the best-seller list in late 1995 to the bridges of Madison County and the Iowa caucuses. Would that make him the GOP favorite? Even a fan like former Republican chairman Rich Bond argues that such a late start would almost certainly be fatal. None of the major GOP contenders would defer to Powell, either because it's their last hurrah (Dole), they crave the national exposure (Gramm, Lamar Alexander), or they are scorched-earth ideologues (that's you, Pat Buchanan).

It is hard to believe that a headless draft-Powell movement could match Dole and Gramm in fundraising or in field operations, crucial factors in a year when Republican primaries will zoom by faster than the 1991 ground war in Iraq. Moreover, cautions Bond, in an understated moment of candor, "the Republican party is drifting right," a reminder that no matter how he positions himself, Powell is unlikely to run as the ideological soul mate of Newt Gingrich. And the general is totally untested in hand-to-hand political combat. Would he go ballistic over the first negative ad? Could he find the patience to put up with the inanity of some blow-dried network-type shouting questions to him on a tarmac at midnight? Could he explain why his hobby is repairing old Volvos—the ultimate goo-goo McGovernite foreign car—instead of something patriotic like classic Mustangs?

As a general, Powell was something of a modern-day George McClellan, never committing to the battle unless the odds were overwhelmingly in his favor. This innate caution argues against Powell's running either as a Republican or, even less likely, as an I'm-too-pure-for-politics third-party contender. Bond, for one, fantasizes about Powell taking the nation's ultimate appointive post, vice-presidential candidate. For their part, Clinton's political advisers salvage at the long-shot prospect of luring Powell into the administration as, say, secretary of

state. The president sounded out Powell about succeeding Les Aspin as defense secretary, but the general, according to friends, "was philosophically opposed to it" because of the traditional separation of civilian and military authority. This would not be a problem with secretary of state, where the stumbling block—aside from Warren Christopher—is the timing of Powell's memoirs. "Now, of course, if Random House would go for a two-book deal or something like that," fantasized a Clinton insider, his eyes growing bright at the prospect, "it would be a different story."

Of course, all this mythmaking leaves little time to look closely at Powell's record during the Reagan-Bush years, when he rocketed from Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's military aide to national-security adviser to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For them, all that matters is that Powell is a black general with commanding presence who helped win the Gulf war. But talking with the general's former civilian colleagues is enough to prevent me from ever snapping a POWELL FOR PRESIDENT bumper sticker on the old Volvo.

"I saw Powell being obsequious to Weinberger when Cap did some of his most outrageous things," says a former Reagan official. Another Pentagon veteran sniffs that "Powell represents the nihilism of the 1980s, when the game went to the man who could manipulate the bureaucratic process the most."

Sure, Powell looks like a giant compared with such predecessors as national-security advisers Robert McFarlane and John Poindexter. But it is easy to forget that the general did not win his two Medals of Freedom for his service during the Iran-contra affair. The little noticed and underrated final report of independent counsel Lawrence Walsh concludes, "While Powell's prior inconsistent statements could have been used to impeach his credibility, they do not warrant prosecution." Powell's sin conveniently forgetting to tell Congress that Weinberger kept a diary detailing all his Iran-contra meetings. Before you air-brush Powell's image, remember that Roger Altman lost his job as deputy treasury secretary for far less serious omissions during his congressional Whitewater testimony.

In the end, the media's infatuation with Powell is akin to a shipboard romance, a magical illusion that will vanish as soon as the Love Boat docks and the real life campaign begins in earnest. The bitter sarcasm directed at Bill Clinton is a reminder of the anger that follows a political love affair when air castles give way to flawed flesh and reality. But the truth is, to paraphrase Lyndon Johnson, Clinton is the only president we've got. It is a dangerous deception to believe that the 1996 campaign will yield somebody with acceptable beliefs like Clinton—only more courageous, more disciplined, and more presidential.

Appraised in the blissful quiet that emanates from a bruised and adjourned Congress, the Clinton record is not half bad on the economy, on domestic legislation, and especially on foreign policy. And while it is true that a political phantom like Powell seems a lot like Ike, the downbeat 1990s aren't much like the 1950s, and Eisenhower himself wouldn't exactly be vaulting to the top of my list, either. As a recovering political romantic, I'm keeping my nervous bet on Clinton's learning curve over the next six years. **E**



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John Taylor

# Passion Play

The O. J. Simpson trial has turned into a modern pagan spectacle

**D**AWN HAD BARELY begun to streak the sky when the crowd started forming outside the Los Angeles County Criminal Courthouse on the first day of O. J. Simpson's trial. Aside from its ritualistic value, the gathering was an utterly insignificant event. No legal arguments were to be advanced, no witnesses called, no evidence introduced. Nothing that might shed light on Simpson's role, if any, in the murder of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman was scheduled to occur. Nonetheless, as American society becomes increasingly pagan, as it reverts to preliterate means of comprehending the world, the purely ritualistic event assumes ever more importance, and the crowd was drawn to the courthouse the way a solar eclipse or stunning planetary conjunction could compel ancient tribes to gather at the temple.

In a parking lot across the street, the television networks had constructed their startling, vaguely totemic skyboxes. Every network wanted to be able to broadcast a picture of its anchor and an unimpeded view of the courthouse, with a sweeping cutaway shot down Spring Street of the glass-towered banking district. To acquire such a view, each network had to construct a skybox higher than the ones in front, which meant they were staggered, taller and taller, toward the rear of the lot, until those at the very back soared some five stories into the air.

Made from construction scaffolding topped by plank-wood decks with white canvas awnings

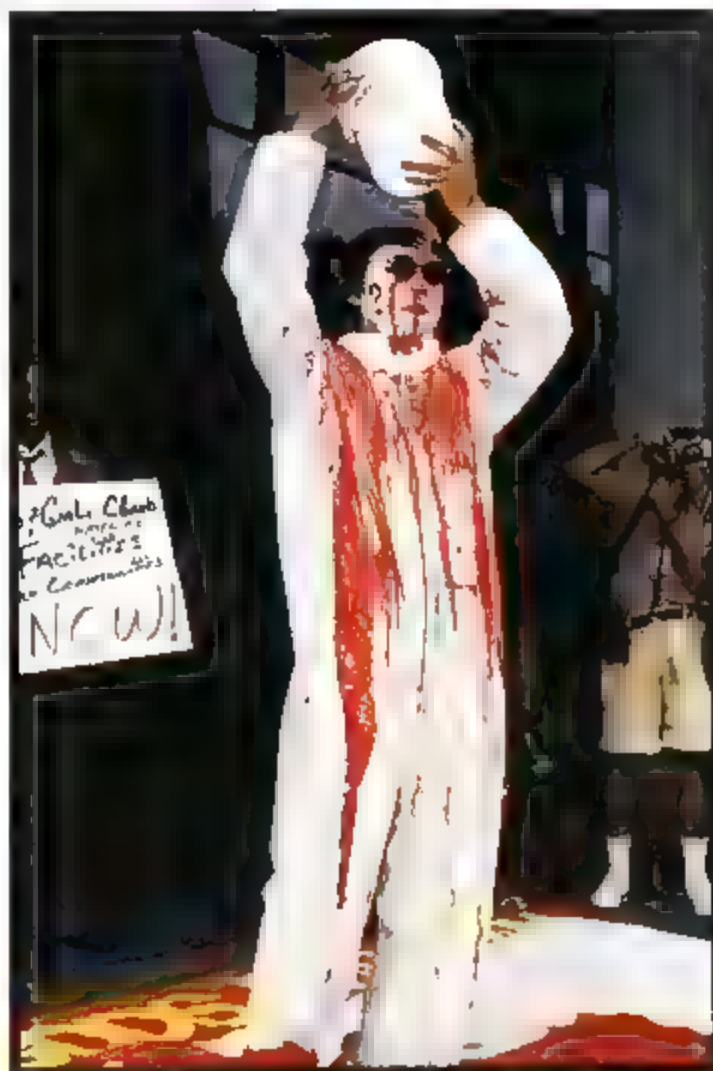
and only the frailest protective railings, the spindly, swaying edifices resembled primitive burial towers. And the correspondents broadcasting live to the morning talk shows seemed like some officiating priestly caste. To the rabble on the ground, the television correspondents were so high above, they appeared tiny. And because they were bathed in the brilliant white of their camera lights, they also seemed invested with a sort of unearthly radiance, emissaries way up in the firmament speaking and gesturing to some intelligence invisible to everyone in the crowd below.

The crowd that morning was giddy and restless, given to the sudden surges of confusing movement that characterize a group of people who don't quite know to what purpose they have gathered. There was in the air a fever of expectancy, the shared desire for illumination, for some signifier, some semiotic transaction, some revelatory or cathartic moment. Archaic emotions had been stirred.

"The spectacle is the material reconstruction of the religious illusion," the French social theorist Guy Debord writes in *The Society of the Spectacle*. "It is a specious form of the sacred."

The thunder of television helicopters overhead, following the van carrying O. J. from the jail to the courthouse, intensified the crowd's anticipation. Then Simpson's close friend Robert Kardashian stepped from a car that pulled up to the curb and, carrying a black garment bag with O. J.'s suit for the day, pushed through the gantlet of television cameras. A short while later he was followed by two of Simpson's lawyers, Robert Shapiro and Johnnie Cochrane. But, saying little, they provided no epiphany.

When would it come, the people wondered, this moment that would reveal to them what it was they were doing there? Around that time was first heard the rapid *toktok-toktok, toktok-toktok* of a prayer drum. The crowd parted. A Chinese man in whiteface, wearing plastic oval sunglasses and wrapped in a dirty red robe that trailed on the ground behind



**It's blood, get it?** Outside the L. A. County Courthouse, artist Pop Zhao performs his religious ritual.

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## AMERICAN SCENE

him, was slowly making his way down the sidewalk.

The robed man's assistants spread a white cloth on the ground before him. One turned on a large cassette player and the agitated strains of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony poured forth. The man stepped onto the white cloth and dropped his red robe in a heap at his feet. Beneath the robe, he wore a white jumpsuit. He cast handfuls of imitation dollar bills emblazoned with Simpson's image into the air, then grasped a large bucket, raised it above him, and ever so slowly poured the oily red paint it contained over his head. Thick rivulets ran down his white face. He then lowered himself to the cloth and, as the Fifth Symphony reached its climax, writhed in stylized agony.

Was this it, was this the semiotic figure, the bearer of the message of meaning? The crowd surrounded the paint-splattered man. He said, in an oddly shy voice, that he was Pop Zhao, a Buddhist performance artist, originally from China. The piece he had just performed symbolized O J's martyrdom. He had prayed for O J to the Chinese gods in the Huang Da Xian Buddhist temple in San Francisco, he said, then selected at random joss stick number 88, which he interpreted to indicate that O J was innocent and that the double murder had been committed by two other men.

"So there's a conspiracy?" I asked.  
"Yes," he said, "there's a conspiracy."

IF THE SIMPSON CASE represents the triumph of murder as an American performance art, it should come as no surprise that an actual performance artist materialized to pay homage to it. Nor should it be a surprise that he arrived as a purveyor of conspiracy theories. Superstition, an irrational attitude of mind, a false conception of causality—is one of the defining conditions of paganism. While the superstitious notions of ancient pagan societies addressed ignorance of nature, contemporary superstitions revolve more around man himself. Our technology, the very

workings of our society, can seem overwhelmingly complex. What better way to explain these mystifying systems than through conspiracy theory? For the conspiracy theory, like the most irrational superstition, alleviates the anxiety of the uncertain.

The collectively held superstition or conspiracy theory, also serves to reinforce tribal identity. The Nazis needed the Jewish conspiracy, Christians, the satanic conspiracy. For many African Americans, there is the white conspiracy, and its most recent victim is O J Simpson. According to this view, which polls show is held by the majority of American blacks,



Simpson is a political prisoner, being persecuted by a white establishment out to demonize all black men.

Laura Blackburne, legal counsel for the New York chapter of the NAACP, believes O J is innocent and has at least three theories of what might have happened. The first is that a drug deal of some sort had somehow gone bad, and Ron and Nicole were executed in retaliation. The second is that they were killed by either a male or female lover of Ron Goldman's. The third is that O J's son, Jason, did it, and O J is covering up for him.

"But what about the samples of O J's blood supposedly found at the crime scene?" I asked her recently.

"Oh, I didn't say he wasn't there."

"You mean the drug dealers, or whoever might have forced him to witness the executions?"

"Exactly."

The prevalence of such views, and not only among blacks, represents just one reason O J Simpson will almost assuredly never be convicted of first-degree murder. In many respects, the trial may already be over, during the four months between his arrest and his trial. Simpson's legal team spent much of its time presenting its case to the public. The lawyers did not offer any coherent theory of what given O J's innocence, might have happened the night of the murders. Instead, under the cover of anonymity, they used publications ranging from the *Star* to *The New Yorker* to shamelessly float rumors, the most

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preposterous of which was that a  
"racist cop" named O J

The sole purpose in spreading such rumors was, of course, to pollute the jury pool. Black paranoia—the view that all the problems of African Americans are due to white racism—may be understandable, given the history of race relations in this country. But the fact remains that it exists, and as was demonstrated by the acquittal on most charges of the black gang members videotaped attacking truck driver Reginald Denny during the L.A. riots, it is susceptible to exploitation by defense attorneys. Robert Shapiro knows this only too well. In his 1993 article "Harnessing the Power of the Press," he discourages defense attorneys from claiming in the media that their clients are the victims of "trumped-up charges," then adds, "An obvious exception would be if there are serious racial overtones."

When such a racial construct is imposed on a murder case, the accused replaces the deceased as the true victim. And not just any victim, but the victim of a conspiracy. The great advantage, from the defense's point of view, of portraying Simpson as this type of victim is that it allows those inclined to side with him to dismiss as part of the conspiracy any evidence that implicates him. It allows people to dispense with rationality in their approach to the facts, to interpret them instead entirely by the peculiar logic that governs the collective superstition.

ONE OF THE IRONIES of the American judicial system is that while juries have no trouble convicting the rich of greed crimes, they often fail to convict them of crimes of passion. Having the money to mount an expensive defense is of course one reason why. Robert Frost once said the job of juries was to decide who had hired the best lawyer. But, at the same time, it is as if the lack of circumstances that traditionally induce criminality—poverty, violent surroundings—becomes in itself an argument for acquittal. O.J. Simpson's life, in this view, simply wasn't desperate enough for him to commit murder and that makes it more difficult to believe he has done so.

Such resistance comes into play particularly when the evidence is circumstantial and the jury has to decide.

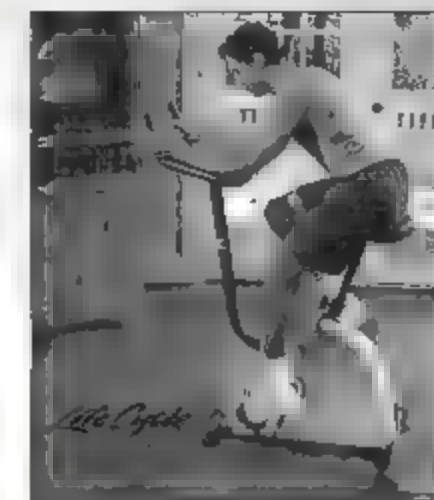
## AMERICAN SCENE

almost through divination, whether the defendant is capable of committing the crime with which he is charged. Based on testimony from the grand jury proceedings, the circumstantial case against Simpson is fairly compelling. Simpson's limousine driver testified that when he arrived at the Simpson mansion at 10:25 the night of the murder, the lights were out, no one answered the door and the white Bronco was not parked in front of the gate, where the police later found it. When the police impounded the Bronco after

noticing a speck of blood on a door handle, they discovered blood on the driver's seat, the driver side floor, the center console, the dashboard, and the inside of the driver's door.

But the circumstantial evidence was also convincing in the case last year against Walker Railey Railey a popular Dallas minister and astute theologian was accused of attempting to murder his wife in 1987 by strangling her—she has been in a vegetative state ever since—in order to take up with his mistress, a psychologist and

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## AMERICAN SCENE

member of his congregation named Lucy Papillon.

Railey was the only real suspect in the case. DNA evidence linked him to threatening letters that prosecutors claimed he had written to himself in order to portray himself as the victim of a conspiracy. Like Simpson, he had no alibi witnesses. He also admitted lying to police about the timing of crucial phone calls that, according to the prosecution, he used to establish a false alibi.

Then, too, Railey's behavior after the attack was hardly exculpatory. He quickly stopped visiting his wife, who is warehoused in a nursing home. He also gave up custody of his children and moved to Los Angeles with Papillon. In a civil suit filed against him by his wife's mother, he was found liable for his wife's attack. But the jury in the criminal trial acquitted him of all charges. The circumstantial evidence wasn't strong enough to overcome innate sympathy for a "beloved pastor."

A significant prosecution witness in the O.J. Simpson case was to have been a young woman named Jill Shively. She had been driving down San Vicente Boulevard in Brentwood at 10:50 the night of the murders, when her car was almost hit by a speeding white Bronco. Its driver, she says, was in a considerable rush, and leaned out the window to yell at her and another car blocking his way. "I saw O.J. Simpson," she testified. "I knew right away it was 100 percent him." Unfortunately for the prosecutors, Shively lied when asked if she had discussed what she had witnessed with anyone else. She had, in fact, already been paid \$5,000 to tell her story to *Hard Copy*, and when that interview subsequently aired, prosecutors were forced to tell the grand jury to disregard her testimony.

As this suggests, the media in the Simpson case have in a strange way appropriated the power of the courts. A television correspondent today makes for a more compelling authority figure than a judge. A check is more commanding than a subpoena. Simpson has profited from this fact even as his lawyers have decried it. For one thing, most of the witnesses who have hurt their credibility by peddling their stories have been prosecution witnesses.

Also, to the extent that such prostitution contributes to the media frenzy, it prepares ground for an appeal in the event, however unlikely, of a conviction. The precedent for this is solidly established. In 1966, complaining of a "carnival atmosphere" in which "bedlam reigned at the courthouse," the U.S. Supreme Court voided the murder conviction of Dr. Sam Sheppard.

The Sheppard case, like the Railey case, bears parallels to Simpson's that are worth examining. One July night in 1954, Marilyn Sheppard was bludgeoned to death in the bedroom of the lakefront house she shared with her husband outside Cleveland. Sam Sheppard, a successful osteopath, claimed that a "bushy haired" intruder hit him on the head, knocking him out but causing no serious damage, before killing his wife with twenty-seven blows of a blunt instrument.

The intruder had left no fingerprints. Neither had he wakened the Sheppards' Irish setter or their seven-year-old son, Chip. And Sheppard had not called the police until two hours after the coroner determined Marilyn had died.

The editor of *The Cleveland Press* became convinced Sheppard was the murderer and began running stories with headlines such as *WHY ISN'T SAM SHEPPARD IN JAIL?* and *GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER*. Journalists investigating Sheppard's life found that, in contrast to the picture of domestic tranquility he had painted, he had been violent, domineering, and unfaithful, making love to one patient while her leg was still in a cast and carrying on a torrid affair with a chestnut-haired medical technician he had promised to marry.

The ingredients of "sex, suburbia, and money," in the words of one reporter who covered the trial, created a true fifties frisson. The nation was fascinated. Thousands of tourists trooped past the Sheppard home. Gossip columnists from New York—such as Dorothy Kilgallen—arrived to cover the trial, creating what an appellate judge would later describe as the atmosphere of a "Roman holiday."

What is astonishing is the extent to which court officials collaborated in the festivities. The original inquest degenerated into a brawl, with the coroner physically ejecting a lawyer, to the



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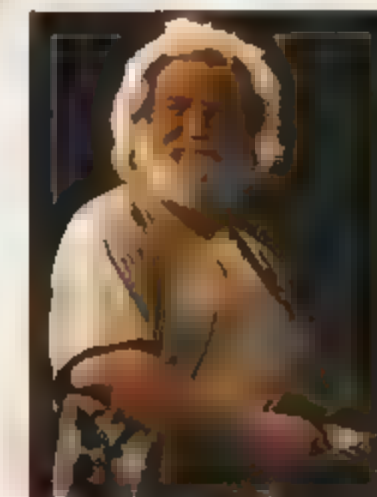
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## AMERICAN SCENE

cheers of spectators. The trial judge, Edward Blythin, gave television interviews. He let the press publish the names and addresses of prospective jurors, who were then subjected to harassing calls. He allowed reporters to set up a special table inside the bar of the courtroom behind Sheppard and his attorney, who consequently had to leave the room to have private discussions. He even turned over to one television station a room next to the jury room and permitted it to broadcast from there during jury deliberations.

Throughout the trial the press was awash in speculation, and, as with the Simpson case, conspiracy theories abounded. Even some of Sheppard's close friends and supporters disbelieved the "bushy haired" intruder story. A few felt that Sheppard knew the killer and was covering up for him. Or her. One theory was that Marilyn was killed by a neighbor's wife with whom Sheppard had been having an affair. None of this was admitted into the courtroom, and after being convicted, Sheppard spent ten years in prison before F Lee Bailey, who is now working for Simpson, convinced the Supreme Court that all the publicity had denied Sheppard the chance for a fair trial.

In the decision, Justice Tom Clark attacked Blythin because he "did not fulfill his duty to protect Sheppard from the inherently prejudicial publicity that saturated the community." In his defense, Blythin noted, "Not a single specific item is cited to support the claims made that Sheppard is innocent." Sheppard's case became the basis for the TV series and movie *The Fugitive*, which assumed his innocence. Released, he married Ariane Tishen, a German "divorcée." In the years before he died, in 1970, she accused him of beating her.

THE CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE at the Sheppard trial never remotely approached the seething mania of the Simpson case. But the difference is not just one of degree. It was words: the power of headlines and the ideas they expressed that supposedly undermined Sheppard's right to a fair trial. In the Simpson case, the importance of words has been superseded by televised images—of the Bronco on the freeway, of O J at his arraignment,

of Nicole and Ron, of the crime scene and the mansion, of the judge and the lawyers.

As literacy recedes, a novel sort of polytheistic religion has asserted itself, one in which images—rather than, as in the Enlightenment, principles—are the true objects of devotional loyalty. Most of these, coming from television, consist of product brands and celebrity personae. There is no real difference between the two. Both are marketing devices defined by a contrived image and developed to sell products.

To the extent that they can do that both are also commodities and, as such, are susceptible to fetish worship. "Following in the footsteps of the old religious fetishism," Debord writes, "with its transported convulsions and miraculous cures, the fetishism of the commodity also achieves its moments of acute fervor."

Indeed, the entire Simpson saga has from the beginning existed within the fertile confluence of commerce and primitive religious feeling. Aware of this himself on some level, Simpson has approved, from jail, the marketing of statuettes in his image. Unlike traditional Christianity, in which only the morally superior the saints, are worthy of veneration, the polytheistic religions accept the capacity for evil in the gods whose idols they worship. Interestingly enough, Simpson's defense strategy during the unfolding trial seems to be not so much to prove his innocence as to assert himself, to the public and the jurors, as an irresistible commodity fetish.

On the first day of jury selection, that process as much a performance as anything Pop Zhao has ever undertaken, was well under way. Simpson radiated a preternatural affability. As both Dan Rather and the Menendez brothers have done with much effect, he wore an image-softening cardigan. He smiled at potential jurors, he sang to himself, he joshed with reporters. His attorneys, like coaches on the eve of a crucial game, assured us he was in fighting spirit, was prepared, emotionally and physically, for the big one. The Juice we once thought we knew was back. It was a compelling performance, but then, in postliterate paganism, the performance has replaced the idea as the ultimate reality.



*It had been a long trip, but both Norbert and Enksworth had heard there was nothing more spectacular than watching the fireworks in the States on Independence Day. Unfortunately, no one bothered to tell them that this generally took place after dark. Timing is Essential.*

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Mike Lupica

# Mr. Big Shot

He spiked New York in the NBA playoffs. Now Reggie Miller is talkin' the talk once again.

REGGIE MILLER stands on the corner of Sixty-seventh and Columbus in New York City shortly before ten in the morning. He is waiting for the ball, thirty blocks north of Madison Square Garden, four months removed from the night in the playoffs against the Knicks when he scored twenty-five points in the fourth quarter, hit jumpers so theatrically from so far away, you felt you were watching Reggie Jackson hit home runs out of the World Series. Today Miller is a guest on *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*. He has just come from the studio after presenting a Pacers jersey—number 31—to Regis and flowers to Kathie Lee, a gesture that made the women in the audience want to take him home and fix him a hot meal. Built like a swizzle stick, his legs impossibly thin, Miller always looks hungry. Now, followed by a McDonald's, he and Regis walk outside to Columbus Avenue, where they will stage a three-point shooting competition.

Before the show, Regis had burst into the greenroom, where the guests wait to go on.

"I want a piece of you," he said in his cab driver's voice.

"You and everyone else in New York," Miller said.

"The basket's all ready. Regis versus Reggie."

"I wore comfortable clothes," Miller said. "I wanted to be able to move around." He made a shooting motion with his hands. "Didn't want to give you an edge because you're the host."

"Just don't do to me what you did to the Knicks," Regis said.

Miller, who has become one of the biggest basketball stars in the world because he has bombs when everyone else seems to want to dunk the ball, smiled again. "I may not be able to help myself."

When Michael Jordan retired in 1993, big men suddenly ruled the NBA. All the talk in the league was about centers: Hakeem Olajuwon and Patrick Ewing,

Shaquille O'Neal, Alonzo Mourning, and David Robinson—even Dikembe Mutombo of the Denver Nuggets. Reggie Miller was just an All-Star making bombs and pull-up jumpers knifing to the basket when he had to talking as much trash as anyone in the game. No one really noticed outside Indianapolis.

In the spring of 1993, he charged into the playoffs against the Knicks and made everyone guarding him crazy with his talk. John Starks got so frustrated, "I used to have good success calling him 'Bitch,'" Miller says—that he head-butted Miller and was ejected from a game. The Knicks won in four, but Miller averaged twenty-four points a night.

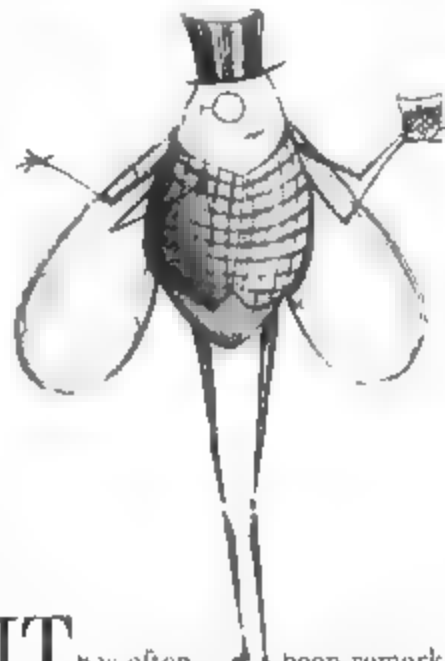
Last season, under new coach Larry Brown, the Pacers started slowly. After the All-Star game, they quietly—as quietly as something can happen with Miller on your team—became one of the best in the sport. They eliminated the Orlando Magic in three straight games to start the playoffs. Then they took out the Atlanta Hawks, who had the best record in the Eastern Conference. And in the next round, against the Knicks, with the series tied two games all, Reggie served up the most electrifying shooting performance in playoff history. He erased a twelve-point Knick lead all by himself, scoring twenty-one of his team's first twenty-seven points in the fourth quarter. He finished the game with thirty-nine, twenty-five in the fourth.

Sleepy Floyd once scored twenty-nine in a playoff quarter for the Golden State Warriors. He did not do it in Madison Square Garden. He did not do it against the Knicks and a defense that has made basketball look like football the last few seasons. Throughout game five, Spike Lee, sitting in the Garden's celebrity seats, taunted Miller, telling him that he couldn't keep it up. Reggie smiled and clutched his throat, giving Spike the choke sign, and then he grabbed his crotch.

**The hot hand:** Miller, who's got a game to match his mouth, has put the basket back into basketball.



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My friend Hamish, at a pre-Christmas party in my garden, found a fly had landed in his glass and drowned. "Don't worry Hamish," said I. "Have another Macallan in a clean glass." "I shall do nothing of the sort," he replied, removing the tiny creature from his glass and sipping the sherry gold elixir.

"The Macallan never hurt a fly, and nor does a fly hurt The Macallan!" Ten minutes later indeed the insect stirred and flew off.

"There you are " said Hamish triumphantly "And now you can give me a *gnat's more* "

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## THE SPORTING LIFE

"Water," he said. In one stretch he made five three pointers in a row. Even Reggie Miller could not deliver a title for the Pacers, but he was on the map. He appeared on the Letterman show with Spike Lee last spring, and he was one of the main events on Dream Team II last summer. These days, when opposing crowds mock him by chanting "Cherrrrr-yl Cherrrrr-yl" (the name of his sister, a college basketball star—he just laughs).

"I think of myself as a throwback," he says. "I can shoot from far away. I can make my medium range stuff. I can go in there and dunk if I have to. And I pride myself on fundamentals. When I'm called for traveling, I always look at the ref and say 'Are you sure?' Because I take pride in my footwork."

There is a crowd gathering on Columbus Avenue now as Reggie, wearing his Pacers jersey, begins a running commentary. Reggie sports a sweater with so many colors you get the idea it was designed to resemble a bowl of Campbell's soup. He picks up a basketball, sets his feet, and sends the ball floating toward the rim high above the New York street corner.

And masses

He misses again

Regis hits one and celebrates. hip  
py as a Knick making a jump shot  
Miller finally hits one and then another.  
finding his mark in the heavy wind on  
the West Side of New York

"What'd I finish?" he asks in the greenroom after the show.

"Three for nine "

"I was just getting warmed up," he says, smiling brilliantly. "Besides, I'm a fourth-quarter guy."

Let the others dunk all they want. Reggie Miller is the man who put the basket back into basketball!

**O**N THIS MONDAY MORNING in New York City with baseball gone and hockey about to go and the basketball season still too far away, at a time when it seems as if autumn's athletes are disappearing off the radar Reggie Miller of the Indiana Pacers is a sports event just walking down Fifth Avenue after breakfast "This is an amazing place," he says, walking fast and talking fast. People sitting in traffic start yelling his name and waving at him. Since breakfast he has been arguing that nothing in his life has

changed "I've been shooting like this all along," he says—but it is clear that things have changed plenty.

"You take the thing with Spike," he says. "Now, I've got no problem with Spike but when you look back on game five, it was like Spike became a major player all of a sudden. From then until the end of the series, he got more publicity than the rest of the players. I don't think stuff like that happens anyplace else."

"You should play here," I tell him.

"Never Nice place to visit and all that I can't wait till we come in for our first game against the Knicks. But that's the way I like New York. Get in get out. Too much shit can happen here."

"Besides," Miller says, "you have to remember something I hate those sons of bitches."

"Which sons of bitches?"

"The Knicks"

He is moving faster now, as if making one of his hard drives right into the city, enjoying the morning and the horns blaring from Fifth when people see him, occasionally waving back. Miller may hate the Knicks and not want to spend more time in New York than necessary, but his energy matches the energy of the place. New York and Reggie are at perfect pitch, in perfect sync.

"You think they're a dirty team?" I ask him.

"Listen, I think I'm always going to have a love-hate thing going with the Knicks," he says. "Do I think they're a dirty team? No. I don't. I think the Knicks play hard every night. I mean every damn night. But I think when things aren't going the Knicks' way they are willing to cross the line and do whatever it takes to win. And then there are times when the Knicks, in my opinion, will play dirty on purpose."

"Which players are dirty?"

"It's just the Knacks as a whole," Miller says. He smiles innocently. "I couldn't even begin to single out one person." He pauses for a beat. Then he fingers John Starks, citing a loose ball scuffle in the playoffs when Starks "dove at my knee."

"What did you do?"

"I might have kicked him just to let him know that he'd crossed over the line, and he wasn't going to get away with that."

Miller knows how to hold his




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## THE SPORTING LIFE

ground. His big sister, Cheryl, once scored more than a hundred points in a high school basketball game. She was a star on the women's team at USC and won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. "Cheryl was the best ever," her brother says. "She was a combination of Magic and Larry and Michael." She was also a good bit taller than Reggie when they were kids. Reggie learned to shoot from outside because he had to. He had to step back and hit bombs because if he went inside, a girl would swat his shots away. "You didn't want your sister slapping your best stuff into the flowers," he says.

He started growing at Riverside Polytechnic High in California and he didn't stop. He knew he had arrived the day he swatted one of Cheryl's shots into their mother's flower bed. "She looked at me, very serious," he says, "and she goes, 'We play horse from now on.'"

Fearsome as individuals, Cheryl and Reggie were even more frightening when they played together. They were expert at hustling two-on-two games, searching for pigeons at Hunt Park in Riverside or the court at the John Adams Elementary School.

"I was like the Wesley Snipes character in *White Men Can't Jump*," Reggie says. "Cheryl was Woody Harrelson. I'd make her wear her old Trax basketball shoes—the kind you get at Kmart? She'd wear these high socks with all the colors at the top. And she'd put her hair in braids, to look even more sweet and innocent. I'd get us a game. Like, I'd say to the guys, 'I'm all by myself.' Then I'd look kind of embarrassed over at the bushes and say, 'Unless you count my sister.' Then Cheryl'd come out. And I'd make the bet. We'd get behind like five-nothing, and we'd go double or nothing. Cheryl would take them inside and I'd take them outside, and pretty soon we had scored ten baskets in a row and we were on our way to McDonald's."

When he finished high school, Reggie moved on to UCLA, where he averaged more than twenty points a game his junior and senior years. He was drafted by Indiana in 1987 and spent a few dreary seasons in Market Square Arena before hitting it big on Broadway. This fall, the NBA decided to shorten the distance for a three-point

basket, and everyone assumed that Miller would throw himself a party in anticipation of making three pointers as if they were layups.

"It geeks me off that they moved the line in," he says.

"You should love it," I tell him.

"You don't understand," Miller says. "Now everyone will be able to do it." He shakes his head mournfully. "Even the big guys will be able to get in to the act."

In New York, where the Broadway revival *REGGIE* first started, Miller says, "Where it was before, that was a man's shot."

This from the guy who learned to shoot over a girl.

**R**EGGIE MILLER IS GLOATING. He looks as if he just hustled two suckers out of lunch money. He is convinced that trying to find a Pacers hat or T-shirt in New York is like trying to find some Republican memorabilia at the Democratic National Convention. Dave Benner, Indiana's PR man, bets him that the next sporting goods store we come to will have Pacers gear in stock. At Herman's on Fifty-seventh Street and Sixth Avenue, there is not a single item.

"Yesssss!" Miller chants. "Yessss!"

"He's consistent," Benner says. "You have to give him that. An obnoxious, ungracious winner as always."

Reggie high-fives the store manager and bows out the door heading east now toward another sporting goods shop. A crew from the Fox TV show *New York Undercover* is filming a scene in front of the Plaza Hotel, and Miller stops to watch. One of the production guys spots him towering above the passersby.

"Reggie Miller," he says, "after what you did to the Knicks, you get your ass out of here." He smiles sheepishly and offers Miller his hand. Reggie shakes.

"How come you don't come play on our team?" the man asks.

"I love being the enemy," Miller says.

The bet is double or nothing as we approach the New York Yankees clubhouse store just off Park Avenue. The minute we walk through the door, Miller knows he has been had. "Shit," he says. He looks around, embarrassed at his outburst. There are Pacers caps to

his left. Reggie's Indiana jersey hangs on the wall next to his uniform from Dream Team II.

Dave grins. "I guess it's worth pointing out that he is also an obnoxious and ungracious loser," he says.

Miller signs autographs, then poses for pictures with the tourists outside the store. He hears someone screaming his name and turns to see PBS television host Charlie Rose on the sidewalk. Rose comes from North Carolina. He is a basketball nut.

"You've got to come on the show tonight," Rose says before they even shake hands.

"I wish I could," Miller says. "but I've made plans."

"We'll put you on right after Sam Nunn!"

"Next time," Miller says.

"When's training camp start?"

"Couple of weeks. We're going to be in Chapel Hill, actually."

"The Dean Dome," Rose shouts. He makes it sound like the Vatican.

The two men shake hands, and Rose walks off with a couple of women from his staff. Miller watches them go.

"This," he says, "is a crazy place."

We walk back toward Fifth Avenue and the Plaza Hotel, where Miller is staying. At Fifty-eighth Street, we wait for a light to change. A small, shy woman tries to tap Miller on the shoulder from behind. She gets him in the elbow.

"Mr. Miller?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I just want you to know that I'm a big fan of yours."

Miller seems quite pleased. He starts to speak, but the woman is already shaking her head sadly.

"even if you did shove John Starks."

Miller howls.

"I didn't shove John Starks. He shoved me!"

"That's what you say," she says. "Very nice to meet you, anyway."

Reggie Miller's indignation is short-lived. On the corner of Fifty-eighth and Fifth, he stops and does a soft shoe. It is not too bad, but then he has been talking proudly of his footwork all morning. "If you can make it here," he croons into an imaginary microphone, "you can make it anywhere."

He ought to know. ■

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stanley Bing

# You're as Hip as You Feel



You were born cool. You've lived cool. So why should you die a square?

**I**N BUSINESS, you meet a lot of square people. It's hard to imagine one of them with hair down to his shoulders and little blue sunglasses on his nose, chomping on a big fat reefer and sprawled all over the unmade bed with his old lady listening to *Surrealistic Pillow*. But like as not, that's where your vice-president of purchasing has come from. Where have we all gone wrong?

This comes to me one night over the six o'clock news. It's at the Meadowlands in New Jersey. In the background are thousands of people barbecuing off the backs of their Range Rover wannabes. Smoke rises through the air, all of it legal. You can almost smell the salmon and swordfish cooking. It's the first leg of the Rolling Stones' Voodoo Lounge tour, which took place during the same weekend as Woodstock '94. That very morning, in fact, pictures of twenty-somethings frolicking in the mud had been shot around the world—images that were deeply disturbing to boomers everywhere. I assure you: You'd the lesser generation at last be getting itself together, assuming the mantle of supreme hipness and marketability we had tarried under for so long? The echt-perky newswoman, who was clearly selected for her membership in boomerville, her

self (and didn't she look good), was burbling about the "grand old men of rock n' roll" and snippets of the cadaver that used to be Mick Jagger were cut in from publicity footage. Then there was a tasty tranche de de interview to wrap things up.

The guest was a chunky suburban hausfrau in her mid-forties with her beaming, baldish husband by her side. "I know," said the reporter, "there's a big rock concert going on in Woodstock tonight. How come you're here instead of there?" "That thing up in Woodstock isn't the *real* Woodstock," said the woman, smiling with the kind of smug authority my generation can muster when we feel we have the moral high ground. "We had the *real* Woodstock. We had peace and love and everything! And there'll never be anything like it ever again!" Her husband nodded, beaming.

Here it was again. The boomer thing. The downscale affluence of her clothing, so casual, but neat—not you know, schmutzy. The glorification of a fictional past that was so impossibly hip no future generation can approach it. The smarmy tone of self-congratulation. Wow, I thought. This is what Gen Xers see when they look at us. Thanks, God the little buggers can't express themselves!

But—can't you remember? You're the taut, dangerous boy who stayed up for an entire week once between Christmas and New Year's, tripping your brains out with that girl from Skidmore. You're the kid who believed that Ramakrishna could split his consciousness from his body and make it fly anywhere he wanted it to. You're the four people who were arrested outside Raytheon one pleasant spring morning in 1969, and even the 128 who chose not to be, who went home and had dinner with your pals instead and talked about the demonstration, how you were there and all. You drank homemade beer and ralphed. Then you Rolled. And much of the time, you were consumed with an incandescent, righteous rage at the world for its violence, stupidity, corruption, just plain boneheaded wrongness. It was a good feeling. There were so many horny people around, too! Sometimes you even got laid. Maybe even a lot of the time. You lived for today. You got satisfaction.

Now you're in business. On the line at the Price Club. I couldn't tell you from Mr. Papparella, my high school shop teacher, with a bowling ball for a waistline and a belt too wide for your pants, complaining about where these kids today stick things into themselves. Shame on you! Feh!

Come on, now. Let's see what we can do to pull you back to the white-hot center of the boomer drama. The good news is that you can be worthy of your generational heritage and be a big 1990s player at the same time. How?

Have tons of indiscriminate sex. Wouldn't that be great? Wasn't that a big part of your thing? Sure it was. Finding girls. Letting girls find you. Getting back rubs from girls. Giving

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

foot massages to girls. Hurtful swapping that destroyed friendships! Wasn't that an important part of your life? Hmm? Well? Tell the truth. Basically, you had one girlfriend at a time and were thankful for her isn't that right? Beyond that wasn't most of the sexual revolution just talk? So... what's changed, man? When you get right down to it, the sexual revolution really involved a small group of dynamic, hysterical, acquisitive girls who went about collecting an incredible number of much more inert and frightened men, and Cliff Markowitz who shaved in the eighth grade and had his own pied a terre in Manhattan when he was seventeen. Other than that, it was pretty much hype. You can still do that! Bullshit is as much a part of business as your Rolodex. Get with the guys. Admire one another's fictional and past encounters. And don't allow the current level of censorious PC mung to rise above your zesty taste for fantasy! It's antigerational. Talk love, not war!

**Take tons of drugs.** No brainer here. The prescriptions may change, but the beat remains the same. V.I.Z. The year is 1993. I'm arriving at a big party, hundreds of boomers rocking an old A-frame to the rafters. Inside everyone is wrecked. My pal Werblin is at the top of a long flight of stairs. "Bing!" he yells when he sees me, takes one step forward, and falls directly down the stairs, head over heels for a while then humpity bumpity bump on his ass, all the way to the bottom. Kind of folding over loosely and bonking into things as he goes. At the bottom, he hits the floor with a sickening thud, pops up, smiles, and says, "Think God for those 'judes'!"

Cut to last year. We're at a bar in Houston. Rafferty comes over to me. His face is red as a tomato, big as a moon of Jupiter. "Bing!" says Rafferty, his hair sticking up at angles for which there are no computations. "We're going to turn this place into a parking lot!" He sits on a chair, tips back, then all the way back, then onto the floor, pow. He pops up, grinning and chortling, and howls at me. "Good move, huh?" You bet, man. And generationally correct, too. So have a martini! It would be wrong not to!

**Dress weird.** It's a message to the Man, and a good one, too. In the 1960s, I had a leather headband I made from a Tandy kit. Wore it a lot. Made me look

very silly. I think, but nobody told me so. I also had a pair of platform shoes that gave me a couple inches of height. I really liked 'em. In the 1980s I had a pair of Frye boots. Wore them everywhere, even under suits. Today I sport ties with cows on them. You ought to see how they play at a meeting. "Bing's got his cow tie on!" Kline will observe, and there will be a laugh at my expense. An older guy criticizing my clothes! What could be more ironic than that!

**Grow your hair.** Obviously, many of us can't do this at all anymore. I have one section of my head that will still grow long hair, the rest merely achieves an enhanced state of random fluffiness. The thing is, nobody who's doing well in business has really good hair, don't you know that? Ever take a look at Larry Tisch? Rupert Murdoch? Everybody's I know is thinning or oddly bushy in the wrong places. So don't let the fact that you look bizarre dissuade you. Grow that sucker. You don't think you looked good back then, do you? Why should you look any better now?

**Live the music.** No matter what a blackhead you may be, you're never too lunko to rock. In fact, I am at an early-morning meeting with Band, a senor financial type, a man about as hip as Leonid Brezhnev, if one may be permitted to remember him. He is paging over a profit and loss statement and drinking a cup of hot water when he has told me it is "real easy on the stomach." I see no reason to disbelieve him. I notice he is humming in a tuneless fashion to himself. "Love is strong," he hums, "and you're so sweet, you la la la, and hum-bum-bum." "You're an off the Rolling Stones?" I ask him, feeling sort of queasy. "Oh, yeah," he says. "Have been since Evil on Mum Street." See what I mean? Inside that repressed gray man is a pageant of wacky colors yearning to burst out. Let it go, bud. Who knows what else might tumble? Maybe your right wing politics!

**Never trust anyone over thirty.** That's right. I said it, and I'm glad. Boomin' is all about respect for chaos over order, youth versus authority, brain damage against sobriety. There is no room for the smug. The old. The sclerotic. We're still younger than everybody else, aren't we? So don't go on about how great things were thirty years ago. We're as hip as we ever were!

Best of all, we shine a bright light for the younger generation to follow. Not the pale, social-climbing junior-vice-presidential Gen Xers, but the real up-and-coming hipsters now under twenty who are defining the next wave of cool.

My friend Lauren, for instance, used to be a stone flower child. She now has a son, Mark, who's nineteen and reminds me a lot of the way we used to be. Last year he decided he didn't want to go to college, even though he's a smart boy and would have done well. He dropped out and started following an itinerant rock group. The rock group is attached to people who, her son tells her with great moral hauteur, walk around naked and sometimes even have sex in front of their children because "sex is a natural part of life."

Mark no longer believes in washing because it removes the "natural body oils and secretions" that are an important part of human life. He sleeps on a straw pad in the basement. When at home, he doesn't eat with his parents anymore, instead, he meticulously prepares a meal of arcane grains, which he consumes from a small wooden bowl he tends fastidiously. At this writing, he weighs ninety-four pounds and has hair down to his waist that hasn't been washed in two months. His mother bought him some natural shampoo a while ago, but Mark refuses to use it because he doesn't like the way the enzymes in it are hydrolyzed. He smokes grass when he has some, but since he has no money (he believes it's corrupt), he has to wait until someone lays the reefer on him. Once in a while, his friend Nighthawk, from Stamford, comes over, and they hug hello, walk together and eat from their respective bowls. Mark is judgmental of his parents' whole lifestyle. They're parasites, he tells them, living lives that are an accumulation of hypocrisies and lies.

Hey, wait a minute. Check me if I'm wrong. This kid is a complete jerk who could use a swift kick in the butt, a couple of good, thick steaks, a stiff drink, maybe a cigar, and a solid job that puts him in a suit or uniform of some kind from now until the age of sixty-two, and I don't know a realistic person who would disagree with me. Would you? And if that's unhip, tough. Even coolness has its limits.

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## MONEY TALKS

Christopher Byron

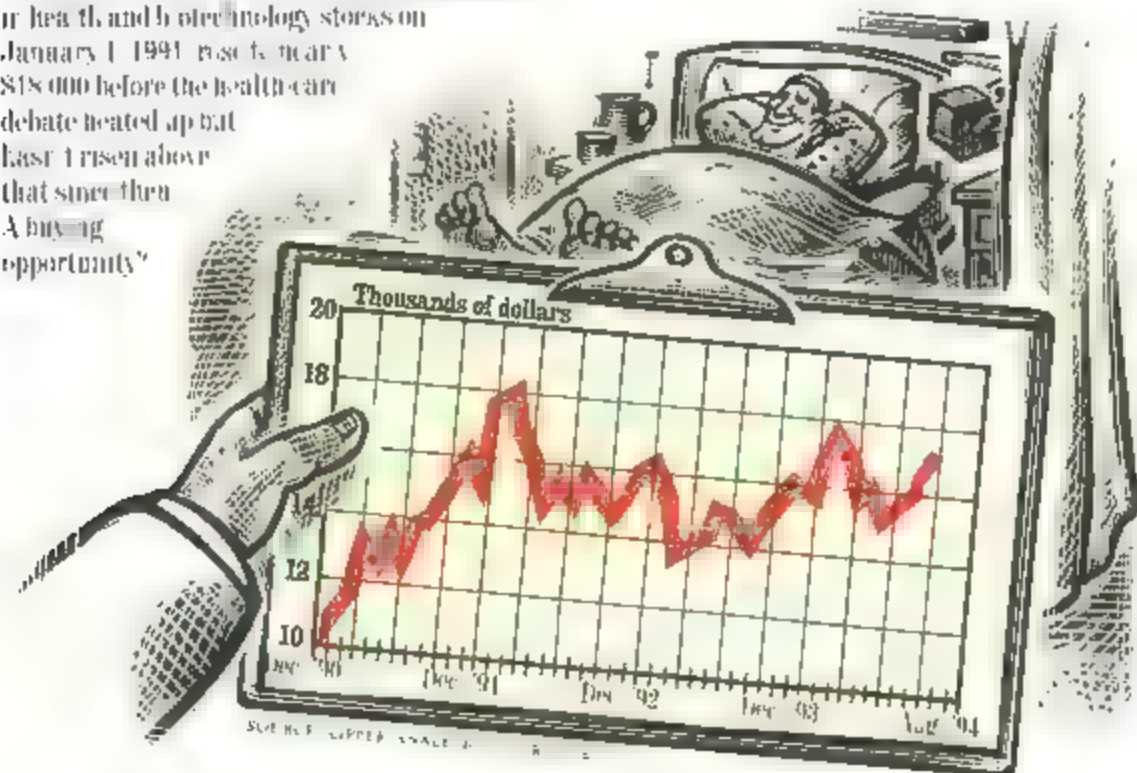
# Here's to a Healthy Recovery

You say you're sick of the health-care-reform debate? We suggest you take the investment cure.

**O**BSERVING THE terminal agonies of the Clinton health bill this year has been instructive on two counts. First, it reminds one of the difficulties a president faces when he tries to accomplish legislative reform without having enough allies on Capitol Hill to see the job through. And second, it underscores the moneymaking opportunities that often arise when the promise of policy reform goes paws up on the Potomac.

The lingering demise of health-care reform has long since become a political farce. But it has also rained money on at least some folks on Wall Street. Under the cloud of the Clinton initiative, virtually every health-care stock got whacked during the last eighteen months, making many investors in the sector huge losers. But the sell-off was inspired by fearful, political prognostications, not economic fundamentals, so now that major health-care reform is dead for at least the remainder of this year, investors are rushing back in to pluck nuggets from the rubble.

**Convalescent chart:** A \$10,000 investment in health and biotechnology stocks on January 1, 1991, rose to nearly \$18,000 before the health-care debate heated up and has risen above that since then. A buying opportunity?



In the process, some really big money is being made. Using the health-care sector of the mutual-fund industry as a rough gauge, we can estimate that investors in this field have seen their portfolios swell by upwards of 12.5 percent since the president's reform plan began to crumble over the course of the summer. With inflation running at an annualized rate of less than 3.5 percent, a 12.5 percent increase in investment value in less than a year is good money. But many on Wall Street will tell you that the gains do little except get the field back to where it was before. According to this view, the big money still lies ahead, particularly for those who invest in the outfits that stand to benefit most from the collapse of reform: health-maintenance organizations, or HMOs.

Although nearly every area of health-care investment got creamed during the eighteen-month-long reform debate, some stocks remain vulnerable. Stuart Butler, an expert at the right-leaning Heritage Foundation in Washington, predicts that Congress could return from the November elections with such a populist zeal that some sort of cap could be put on the premiums that insurance companies charge their customers—a move that would severely crimp earnings. There may also be an eleventh-hour congressional swipe of some sort at the pharmaceuticals sector, which had big losses last year after attacks by Hillary Clinton and her husband.

By contrast, America's more than five hundred HMOs—which offer health care to more than fifty million people—stand out as the only group of companies in the sector that seem immune to political attack of almost any sort. That's because HMOs are already in exactly the business the president wanted to get the federal government into with his health-care "alliances." Instead of giving care on the traditional fee-for-service basis, HMOs register members in a fixed-subscription relationship with medical groups, resulting in "managed care," with its built-in incentives for cost control.

Today, nearly every health-care mutual fund in the country has a significant investment in HMOs, nearly all of which belong to one of the eighty or so mega-HMOs that have membership rolls of more than one hundred thousand customers each. And just about all of these funds are rapidly increasing in net asset value as the stocks of the HMOs return to favor.

Consider the G. F. Global Health Care Fund of San Francisco, a \$480 million mutual fund specializing in medical and

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## MONEY TALKS

health-care stocks. Starting in the autumn of 1992, when Clinton made health-care reform a top priority issue in the presidential campaign, G.T. Global's performance began to edge downward, with its shares selling last spring at 10 percent below what they had sold for on the eve of the Clinton presidency.

Then came the summer and with it the collapse of congressional support for the Clinton initiative. Since then, the shares of G.T. Global have rebounded by nearly 15 percent, buoyed by the nearly 5 percent of its portfolio invested in three hot HMOs alone.

Or there's Franklin Global Health Care, another big mutual fund. Since midsummer, its shares have enjoyed a comparable rebound, also in large part because of its HMO holdings.

**W**HICH HMO'S ARE WE talking about here? One core holding of a number of mutual funds is United Health Care, which owns or manages nineteen HMOs around the country and is, in a sense, an investment fund in its own right. The company has an astounding \$2.3 billion in cash on its books and has shown steady, double-digit earnings growth over the past several years. It, too, got hit by investor selling at the start of the Clinton presidency and again earlier this year when the debate over health-care reform moved back into the headlines. Since then, though, the stock has been on a roll and was recently trading at nearly double its pre-Clinton levels.

So let's say you want to sidestep the mutual funds and invest directly in HMO stocks. Has United now become too pricey? Not necessarily. Salomon Brothers analyst Margo Vignola, who was alert early on to the coming rebound in the health-care sector, figures United's earnings will grow by 30 percent this year. Her counterpart at Oppenheimer, Lori Price, predicts, if anything, greater growth. To Price, who calls United "one of the best positioned and strategically diversified managed-care companies in the country," this prognosis suggests a price of sixty dollars or more per share in the coming months versus a current price in the low fifties.

Among individual HMOs, consider a West Coast group called Pacific Care Health Systems, which was selling at close to fifty dollars a share at the start of the Clinton presidency, quickly tanked, and only this summer began to move above what it sold for eighteen months ago. At a recent price of more than seventy dollars a share, the stock might now seem too lofty to consider. But analysts expect the company to earn at least 20 percent more in 1995 than it will this year, and that in turn suggests a price at least in the low eighties.

Vignola suggests a number of other HMOs that offer the same attractive arithmetic. Among them, Health Systems International, an enticingly undervalued company whose shares have been hammered down by 35 percent in the last year and still haven't fully recovered, and United Wisconsin Services, which is enjoying impressive earnings growth yet is currently trading at the lowest price-to-earnings ratio of any stock covered in the Salomon Brothers universe.

When should you buy? Pretty soon, for this is a window that won't stay open for long, though it could well open up just a tad wider before it slams shut. That's because by the time you read this, a new Congress will have been elected and there will be stories in the papers telling of administration plans to make health-care reform a priority item again.

Even though we won't see anything close to this year's proposal, there's always a chance of yet another momentary sell-off on Wall Street as easily spooked investors decide to cash in their health-care profits and run. So, if you want to gamble on that possibility and wait a while longer, there might be one more buying opportunity just ahead. If the correction doesn't come, though, the stocks could be much more expensive by the time you decide to buy.

And, of course, if a correction does come, it will be pretty hard to buy when everyone else is selling. On Wall Street, it's called climbing the wall of worry; you can run up quite a Maalox bill along the way, but it's an effort worth undertaking nonetheless. That's because when you get to the top, you'll almost certainly have made some money. ■



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Esquire

# End Game

By Pete Hamill

**A**S THIS DREADFUL CENTURY winds down, its history heavy with gulags and concentration camps and atom bombs, the country that was its brightest hope seems to be breaking apart.

All the moves toward decency, excellence, maturity, and compassion have been made. They seem to have come to nothing. Everyone talks and nobody listens. Boneheaded vulgarians are honored for their stupidity. The bitterly partisan debate on the crime bill in the U. S. Senate is remembered only for Al D'Amato's rendition of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." The Christian Coalition commandeers the Republican state convention in Virginia, and among the slogans on the wall is one that says WHERE IS LEE HARVEY OSWALD WHEN AMERICA REALLY NEEDS HIM? The American social and political style has been reduced to the complexity of a



T-shirt: Outta the way asshole. Give us gridlock, give us *Bum and Butt-head*, give us room, man, give us respect, and get outta my fuckin' face!

We are approaching Endgame, the moment when the chessboard is clear and victory is certain. Victory over everybody. The reduction of the opposition to rubble.

American civil society, long founded on the notion of "from many, one," *e pluribus unum*, is being swept away by a poisonous flood tide of negation, sectarianism, self-pity, confrontation, vulgarity, and flat-out, old-fashioned hatred. Politics is an ice jam of accusation and obstruction: the hardest vulgarisms honored for their cynicism, its good men fleeing to tend private gardens. Pop culture both feeds and reflects the larger society, and as evidence of collapse, it is chilling. Snoop Doggy Dogg and Al D'Amato have triumphed over Wynton Marsalis and George Mitchell. Good taste lies up the block with an ax in its back.

Day and night, from millions of car stereos and boom boxes, gangsta rappers and skinhead semi-demi-quasi neo-Nazis give the nation its most persistent, defining soundtrack. Some call for the killing of cops, the raping and abandonment of ho's and bitches, the battering of whites or blacks or one another. Rob the weak, they croon. Stomp the soft. Rap videos are pathetic fantasies of force and power, visual tributes to the cult of the Big Gun and the Big Dick. There is no past and no future, only the eternal American present tense. Suburban white kids happily buy the CDs and lean into the lash. There is no room in the music for lyricism, melody, or wit. The only acceptable human emotion is rage.

The fake, the illusion, the performance, are everything. The truth? Hey, buddy, I got your truth, right here. At The

## American society is being swept away by a tide of sectarianism, self-pity, confrontation, and old-fashioned hatred.

1994 MTV Video Music Awards, Michael Jackson walks on with his bride, the daughter of Elvis Presley. They hit their marks. They engage in a rehearsed kiss. Jackson whispers some clumsy joke about how nobody thought this would last marriage as Special Material. They get a standing O. Of course. Nobody mentions that Jackson had to pay an estimated \$20 million to settle a child molestation rap in California. Hey, man, lighten up. The man's got a multimillion-dollar career to save! Who cares if we're watching a big press-agented lie? He paid for his sins. Cold cash. Now he's redeeming himself with access. And if he acts as if he wants redemption, that is redemption.

So shut up, asshole, and listen to Roseanne deliver her spontaneously written opening remarks: "I'm not upset about my divorce. I'm only upset I'm not a widow." Pay attention to Kennedy. You know, the veejay. Look what she's doing. She's standing behind New York mayor Rudy

Giuliani, sucking off the microphone! Is that hip or what? You know the gag. Kennedy is a right-winger man. That's why Roseanne said she saw Kennedy backstage and "she asked me to leave because she was blowing Rush Limbaugh." But Kennedy doesn't take any crap. Later on, she tells the audience: "I was backstage giving Rush Limbaugh a hummer. That's a [simulates felatio] in case you guys didn't know." I have to concede to Roseanne. He said that she gives a much better blow job. So the Prozac's working." But here comes Roseanne right back: "I would like to respond to Kennedy. I'm no longer on Prozac, bitch. Rush Limbaugh told me you swallow."

God bless America.

But if Rodgers and Hart are long gone, so are Edmund Wilson and Ralph Gleason and James Agee. The greatest critics loved the subjects of their examinations: literature, music, movies. They celebrated quality and dismissed the fraudulent, examining each new object of art the way a master watchmaker looks at another man's watch, admiring the accomplishments, pointing out the flaws. There were always literary ax murderers among them. But in a way, the best of them were attorneys for the defense. They've been replaced by prosecutors. And the penalty they demand for imperfection is death. Behind them have arrived the success-meisters: those who rank artists as if they were entrants in the National Football League, failure the unforgivable sin. Book didn't work? Record didn't make it? Movie opened on Aeromexico? That's it. Arraign him, convict him, get him outta my sight. Sentence him to teach. Book him as a lounge act. Make him an usher. Drop him off the gibbet.

In sports, the style established thirty years ago by

Muhammad Ali has been appropriated by his inferiors, who emphasize the "dissing" but leave out the irony and the humor. (Only Charles Barkley really gets it.) Prizefighters learn how to demean a man before they've mastered the uppercut. Reggie Miller isn't satisfied with playing better than most men in the NBA, he has to make choke signs and grab his crotch and keep up a torrent of trash talk. No football player seems able to carry a ball for a touchdown without following up with some taunting dance in the end zone. Goodbye, Jim Brown, farewell, Gale Sayers, hello, Neon Deion. No baseball player since Don Baylor has been able to endure the occupational hazard of a knockdown patch without charging the mound in retaliation. In all sports, grace is treated like a character flaw. Athletes snarl and mock in triumph—and whine in defeat.

But they have one large excuse. They are only part of this America, the torn, violent country where everybody now plays for keeps. The nation approaching Endgame.

Everybody seems infected with the virus of argument and the need for triumph. Leaders of tiny sects are granted huge television audiences, provided their messages are sufficiently drastic, violent, or stupid, more people know about Louis Farrakhan, of the Nation of Islam, than know about Octavio Paz or Isaiah Berlin. Hour after hour, across the day and deep into the night, talk radio spews forth a relentless message of contempt for democratic institutions, from the presidency, the Congress, and the Supreme Court to the governors, state legislators, and mayors. Rush Limbaugh is the master of this electronic genre, but his imitators make him sound like Henry Adams. They have none of Limbaugh's gift for brittle humor and venomous



Eugene D. Genovese, but they didn't alter the facts to prove the thesis. In the end, history should be history, not an alibi.

"If some Kluge of the Ku Klux Klan wanted to devise an educational curriculum for the specific purpose of handicapping and disabling black Americans," wrote Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., "he would not be likely to come up with anything more diabolically effective than Afrocentrism."

Most purveyors of this therapeutic nonsense attack their critics as racists. But the basic trouble with infusing kids with racial or ethnic chauvinism is that it doesn't even work as therapy. Instead of feeling better about themselves, most of these kids come out of the process seething with bitterness. And this being the United States, anger and rage are followed by the need to blame. Hell, it can't be my fault.

The demands for reparations and revision go on and on, spilling into the newspapers, then amplified by talk radio and television. As presented, there is no solution, because the apocalyptic demand is for the alteration of the past or a surrender of intelligence or an assumption of guilt by the living for the crimes of the dead. But resolution really isn't the point of all this sound and fury. Fragmentation is the point. Segregation is the point. Conflict is all. We're Americans. We have been conditioned to prefer conflict to boredom. We prefer violence to talk. We prefer war to peace. We prefer lies to the truth. Clear the board, citizen. We're reaching Endgame.

### III. Professional Cynics

**T**HE ENDGAME culture of cynicism and bitterness is, of course, best observed in Washington. The genius of the American system has been its ability to compromise. We learned from the fratricide of the Civil War that a failure to compromise could unleash the darkest, bloodiest impulses in the American character. Over the years, we developed in Washington a nonideological style that helped us avoid direct conflict. Sometimes you won, sometimes you lost, politics was a long season, like baseball, in which even the greatest hitters failed six times out of ten. Most of the time, the system worked. Slowly. Tediously.

There were human reasons for this. The state was founded on a document, not evolved through a long, shared common history; its principles and promises were abstract. But after 1890, the nation was populated by huge numbers of Europeans who were different from the original British settlers. They were Catholic or Jewish, they often spoke languages other than English or were illiterate farmers. In one big country, they joined the survivors of the slaughter of the Indians, liberated slaves, conquered Mexicans. To meld them into a unified nation required immense efforts of mediation and compromise on the part of the agents of the state. The greatest task was to make the idealism of the Constitution real for every citizen: the alter-

native was the kind of deep, abiding cynicism that eventually eroded the Communist states, which also had idealistic constitutions. This wasn't easy. Along the way, there were unspeakable crimes against the newcomers, uncountable social offenses, bloody riots, and the horrors of the Civil War. But slowly, decent, intelligent men and women created a living nation from the abstract principles of the state.

That agonizing process created the twentieth-century American political style. The most effective politicians—Sam Rayburn, Everett Dirksen, Lyndon Johnson, Robert Taft—employed a basic courtesy in dealing with their opponents. They disagreed on many things. They were capable of immense vanity. They knew that in the end, politics was about power. But they didn't think it necessary to destroy the enemy. The enemy was over there: Hitler, Tojo, Stalin. Those who swung the broadswords of racism or ideology at other Americans—the Joe McCarthys, the Bilbos and Eastlands—accomplished nothing. They were cheap, vulgar men, ignorant, parochial, and cynical. They never rose to higher office because the American people would not have them. The tougher men who truly changed the country, who moved it along, who made it better, did so with a clarity of vision and a certain amount of grace. They were mercifully free of the utopian instinct. They were always willing to settle for half a loaf. And they each in their own way did think about what was best for the country. They were, after all, Americans before they were Texans or Ohioans or Democrats or Republicans. They respected the contract. They respected the presidency.

That era is behind us, perhaps forever.

Look at what is being done to Bill Clinton.

I don't think Bill Clinton is the greatest president we've ever had. But I know he is certainly not the worst. This is a country after all, that elected Warren G. Harding once and Richard Milhous Nixon twice. But from the moment of his election, Clinton has been subjected to the most sustained campaign of personal abuse of any president in memory. No rumor, no allegation of promiscuity, goes unprinted. Jerry Falwell, an alleged man of God, peddles videos that virtually accuse Clinton of murdering Vincent Foster Jr. A newspaper for which I used to work ran a series of stories about the same case that put quote marks around the word *suicide*. The implication was clear: If Foster didn't kill himself, he must have been murdered. Aha! A movie plot! Melodrama!

While reporters were chasing around after Whitewater, Gennifer Flowers, various state troopers, Paula Jones, and God knows who else, Clinton was actually accomplishing a few things as president. The Republicans linked arms in a spirit of mindless obstruction, led by Dole, but Clinton somehow managed to get an economic plan through Congress, cutting the deficit for the first time in a generation, creating more than four million new jobs. He got NAFTA passed, doing so in opposition to organized labor and Ross Perot. He finally won passage of his crime bill, too, directly challenging the National Rifle Association. He lost on health-care reform, overwhelmed by the Endgamers who spent millions on attack ads and refused to join the process of compromise. He couldn't overcome the Republican filibuster on campaign reform and lost that, too. Dole continued to make the world safe for lobbyists and cynicism. But in some real ways, the country was in better shape than it had been on the day he took office. Unemployment was down. The economy was stronger. The stock market was

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# The press corps works under the assumption that everyone has a dirty little secret and that it's their duty to sniff it out.

healthy. In the Middle East, South Africa, Northern Ireland, the forces of peace and conciliation were winning the day, supported by American policies and actions.

And yet Clinton is the most hated president in memory. His reluctant intervention in Haiti was an example of the process. Jimmy Carter, Colin Powell, and Sam Nunn worked out a deal that would allow American troops to go into Haiti without shooting. The junta of Raoul Cédras would give up power on October 15. The deposed president Jean Bertrand Aristide would return to power and serve out the term to which he was elected in the only free election in that nation's agonized history. For a few hours, most sane people thought this was a rational solution to a miserable situation. At least American soldiers wouldn't have to go in shooting. And some of them wouldn't have to die.

But before anybody could know how this would work out, the attacks started. The Republicans, who cheered for intervention in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf, suddenly developed the white wings of doves. Bob Dole sounded like George McGovern, stating that Haiti was not worth a single American life. The radio chatterers unleashed ferocious barrages, attacking Clinton for ducking Vietnam and now putting Americans in harm's way, dismissing Aristide as an anti-American Marxist nutcase. Joe Klein in *Newsweek* called the intervention "a bizarre Caribbean adventure" while also stating that Clinton "did the right thing" and sneering at Carter as "the Prince of Peace." Michael Kramer in *Time* wrote that "Bill Clinton at war has the disquieting countenance of Bill Clinton at peace; few principles seem inviolate, discipline and incoherence are the norm, careful planning fails to last-minute improvisation, steadfastness is only a tactic."

Journalists are not cheerleaders, of course; they must maintain an adversarial stance with politicians. But the vehemence of the attacks on Clinton seems more a reflex than thought and analysis. A line has developed on Clinton, and to swerve from it entails risks, most of them social and professional. Few people like to face the question, "Are you fucking kidding?" My objection here isn't with the facts or the implications of disaster but with the venomous tone.

In modern times, that slashing, lacerating use of language came into the discourse with Vietnam. It was first employed against Lyndon Johnson (I used plenty of it myself), then Richard Nixon, justified by the endless slaughter of the war and then by Watergate. Irony was lost along with a sense of shared tragedy. What mattered was the casting of anathemas. The Left used the tone first, then the Right picked it up; now it comes easily to a most everybody. The tone is sometimes apocalyptic and always

judgmental, and its essential component is the sneer.

These days, most members of the Washington press corps wear a self-absorbed sneer. They sneer at any expression of idealism. They sneer at gaffes, mistakes, idiosyncrasies. They sneer at the "invisibility" of national-security adviser Anthony Lake but sneer at others for being publicity hounds. They sneer at weakness. They sneer at those who work too hard, and they sneer at those who work too little. They fill columns with moralizing about Clinton and then attack others for moralizing. The assumption is that every one has a dirty little secret, and one's duty is to sniff it out.

Lost in this rancorous process is any regard for the great American art of compromise. Clinton, a professional politician, obviously believes in it and is sneered at for being an incessant pacifier of his opponents. Give us the whole loaf or nothing, comes the intolerant call. Make me feel better. Make me happy. Make life perfect. If you don't, then give us term limits. Get rid of the professional pols and give us amateurs. Oliver North. Ross Perot. Don't tell me the world is complicated.

Penciles couldn't govern that poorly. What chance can Clinton have? Domestically, he's indicted for being too liberal or too conservative, too soft or too callous, too indifferent to public opinion or too desirous of consensus. In foreign affairs, his most poisonous critics remain in thrall to Ronald Reagan's Hollywood worldview, the Big Dumb Ox theory of foreign engagement: using naked power to get your way.

After all, if a president won't smash his domestic opponents, if he won't kill foreigners with icy dispatch, how can he deal with the blacks and the Mexicans and the immigrants and the feminists and the Cubans and the poor and the rich and the disabled and the pornographers and the liberals and the guys with the hyphens in their names? How can he be a leader? How can he be a man?

If this goes on, escalating by the hour, the country is doomed. It will remain a state, of course, a geographical entity, but it won't be a nation. We are in the midst of the largest immigration wave since the turn of the last century. If we have already succumbed to our own jagged forms of tribalism, we can't hope to absorb and assimilate the new arrivals. If we tell the new immigrants that to be an American is to insist on status as a victim, to hate the president and the government, to fear one's neighbor, to reduce all discourse to the most primitive level, then our twenty-first century will be a horror. *E pluribus unum* was not intended to be a gigantic mockery. It's time for all Americans to think about what we're doing to ourselves. It's time to ostracize the sectarian swine who, in Yeats's phrase, multiply through division. It's time to honor good taste, hard work, and all those men and women who cherish human decency.

The gulags are gone. The concentration camps exist only in memory. Nobody worries much anymore about atom bombs. But fear is a habit like any other. So is the need for an enemy. And as the great cartoonist Walt Kelly said long ago, "We have met the enemy and he is us." We can't allow that to replace *e pluribus unum* as the American national slogan. We have to learn how to pipe down and back off. We have to stop shouting for a little while and learn again how to listen.

Otherwise, it's black hats and white hats.  
Us against Them.  
Me against you.  
Endgame. ■

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## A Break in the Action

**A**ND SO AMID pigskin parity, another late-autumn Sunday passes immemorably into the books ("Hundred to Allen, gain of two.") The ebbing afternoon—dolorous, rain-spattered, ennui steeped—somehow seems less promising than before the pregame shows. The matchups have proven less intriguing, the announcers longer-winded, the fat-free bacon-and-horseradish dip so tempting in the supermarket altogether unsatisfying ("He's looking for Carter—*incomplete!*") Even our companion—on this occasion, the supermodel Vendela—normally just a *red* for heart-thumping, pad-crunching gridiron conflict, has apparently concluded that what on a more charitable day might be called a low-scoring defensive struggle ("This is Franklin's fifth punt, and it's a beauty") is actually a display of tedious ineptitude, and has made herself scarce ("It's a little outside Anderson's range, Pat, but you've got to get something on the board before halftime.") But soon, somehow, the aroma of gardenia has overpowered the incumbent odor of Cheez Doodle, and we hear the click-clack and rustle of her return. "Darling," we say, not quite looking up from the screen, "you should have seen how old 76 got up to block that kick."

"You mean," she says, "like this?"

"Oh," we say, a buffet of snack food crumbs tumbling from our chest as we rise, "you've changed."

PHOTOGRAPH BY TIMOTHY WHITE

*Styling by Wayne Seed Lukas  
Body illustration by Alvaro. Hair by Marc Pennell for Rumble and Rumble. Makeup by Lisa M. Marks of for the Streets of New York. Vendela represented by Ford Models. Lingerie by C. Hove. Stock-suit from 1990s. Photograph by Wayne Seed Lukas. Silk-satin dress from 1990s. Photograph by Carter New York. Fresh gardenia from 1990s. Silk-satin dress from 1990s.*



A rare glimpse inside the mind of the King of Late Night.  
*Enter if you dare.*

# Letterman Lets His Guard Down

By Bill Zehme

**I**NSIDE LETTERMAN'S SKULL, you will find Letterman's brain, which holds captive Letterman's psyche—squirming, dark, and exquisite. This is no place for trespassers. It is a protected place, where the brave and the bold know not to tread. Even Letterman keeps his distance. Long ago, it is said, a couple of trained professionals tried to gain entry and were never heard from again. Like any man of substance, Letterman is hard to know. If he knows himself, he knows only enough to wish he knew less. I have known him for a dozen years, spoken

with him during hours grave and triumphant, acquainted myself with the infrastructure of his world, seen his hot-sauce collection. I have watched him become the most powerful man in all of television and derive enjoyment from almost no aspect of it, save perhaps the good seats at Indy. "I have my own private struggle," he will admit, persevering under punishing physical conditions, declining any promise of balm or respite. He must be so encumbered in order to be Letterman. "Very strange," observed the wise Johnny Carson, when recently asked to ponder the miracle. "Lot of churning going on inside David there." That Letterman has

**"If a show sucks, it's me": Not even sidekicks Sirajul and Mujibur can protect Dave from frequent fits of self-loathing.**

now become Carson, which is to say become omnipotent, only bedevils him more. He will not bask, so instead he wallows. To reign, he must first and always deny himself, deny satisfaction, deny everything. And yet, if he did not reign, he would perish. He cannot win, even though he has won. That is Letterman.

I have been inside. I have gone there in increments over long periods, each time retreating hastily before harm could come. I am the friendly inquisitor who pokes him gently and buffets with apology, performing painless extractions. We get on fine. There is shared history. His father and my grandfather, both gentlemen florists, both long dead, tripped together and made much hell at regional FTD board meetings. My mother called his father Uncle Joe and remembers his visits to Chicago from Indianapolis as pure ruckus, full of noise and nonsense. It is a slender bond, but one too odd to ignore. So I dip in and dip out, tormenting him as mildly as he can stand, then leave before he summons the urge to slap me. "Why you sonofabitch!" he grumbled to me last spring, during a chance meeting backstage at *Liv with Regis & Kathie Lee*. (He had come over to wreak havoc.) "You've ruined my career more than once."



On TV, he is alive with rush. "Way too much coffee," Letterman says. "But if it weren't for the coffee, I'd have no identifiable personality whatsoever."

Whereupon he circled me, hunched like a wrestler, then wordlessly walked away. Such is our special rapport.

Of course, no human walks faster than Letterman, and this is essential to understanding him, if there is any understanding him. His gait is long because his patience is not. He barrels forth, an unstoppable force who presumes to waste the time of no one living. He possesses no such arrogance. Likewise, his mind is so fleet and dexterous and vital in private conversation that I am convinced no equal exists, certainly not among entertainers, itself a fraternity to which he would rather die than pledge himself. Still, his quickness does not make pointed talk any easier for him. He has always thought he was boring me senseless during any given exchange—or, at least, pretended as much. "Oh, it was a huge waste of time!" he said recently, recalling several extraordinary hours I spent debriefing him last year, all filmed for CBS promotional spots that heralded the arrival of his *Late Show*. "For you it was, I mean," he added. "I felt bad for you. I kept thinking, *This poor man*."

According to legend, he feels bad always, except for the one hour per weekday he broadcasts, during which time he is adrenaline personified. On TV, he is alive with rush. "Way too much coffee," he says woefully. "But if it weren't for the coffee, I'd have no identifiable personality whatsoever. So that's what we have here." (Also, he is known to consume preshow allotments of fresh pineapple and Hershey's chocolate to enhance the buzz.)

"He's basically the same guy up until show time," says coexecutive producer Robert "Morty" Morton. "Then he as-

sumes a different personality for that hour, but afterward he's right back again." Afterward, he repairs to his twelfth-floor office, where he studies the show tape and systematically divests himself of whatever hubris that got him through the last hour. "If a show sucks, it's me," he has long said, fully sure that he has never given a performance that didn't at least partially suck. He told me, "I can never walk out of there thinking, 'Oh, my God, we're a hit. Everyone loves us! I've never experienced that.' Nevertheless, he is a nut, and everyone loves him. From his Emmy acceptance speech upon receiving this year's award for outstanding variety, comedy, or music series: 'Well, I don't need to tell you folks—there's been a huge mistake. Ha ha.' Then, 'I have very little to do with the show. Every day, about five, after my manicure, I put on a suit and go to work.'"

OUTTAKE FROM AN INTERVIEW conducted in June 1993, in a stark West Side film facility, recorded by CBS (Letterman and I sat at opposite ends of a long table).

Q: How would you explain your work to foreigners?

A: Well, first of all, I wouldn't be hanging around foreigners. You know that. I'm xenophobic. [Chuckles] I'm the

guy running the TV show. Not really a host. Anybody who has ever seen me work knows that. Anybody who has been a guest in my home knows that. And, by the way, there have been very few guests in my home. Especially foreign guests. I don't know. You're the guy on the show who has the best wardrobe, so people in the audience at least know where to look. Everything falls into place after that. There is very little skill involved with it. You just have to smile when things really aren't that funny. And when things are sort of funny, then you have to laugh like crazy. I'll be doing a lot of that here today with you. That's about it. Everything else is done in the control room.

HE IS A NERVOUS KING, for which he cannot be blamed. There he stood, next in line for eleven years, too polite to grease his own ascension. He had been prince and future king since the night of his first audience with monarch Carson, had even been allowed to sit on the throne, in substitute capacity, sooner than any other mortal, after a mere three stand-up shots. (His first *Tonight Show* appearance remains in his appraisal, the last time he actually felt good about himself—sixteen years ago.) It was Carson who then, in 1982, permanently installed Letterman into the empire of late-night TV, gave him the hour affixed to his own, so that they could rule in tandem. Everything was in place. Until the palace coup. Leno, greatest jester in the land, who did not initially amuse Carson but always amused Letterman, consorted with dark forces to nuzzle and sway network cabinet ministers ("NBC" pinheads) in the dour parlance of

Letterman.) In short order, a feverish blur to this day—the network had nudged Carson aside and, without royal consent, enthroned Leno as host of *The Tonight Show*. Carson retired to Malibu, shaking his head, appalled but unsurprised. Letterman, who saw it all coming, nevertheless fell into his of incredulity and extreme self-loathing. Blandly, honorably, his allegiance had belonged only to Carson, never to the network, for this he was punished if but for a moment. Elsewhere, he was quickly promised the moon, so he took the moon, at CBS, and instantly owned the night. At once, *The Tonight Show* was reduced to shambles, a no-show residence unfit for a king. Letterman's *Late Show* gleamed and ruled. He was now a man in control, like Carson. Don Rickles came on one night and grumbled, "Gotta go. I'm due at Jay Leno's house for dinner later." Said Letterman, "I'm sure you'll enjoy the peace and quiet." (The exchange was excised from the broadcast. Letterman is nothing if not a benevolent king.) Leno, for his part, essayed contrition. "Dave's story is the great American story," he said. "You work for a place. You're unappreciated there. You leave. Then you go across the street and build a bigger business."

ON THE JANUARY DAY NBC executives huddled in Florida to decide whether to dump Leno or lose Letterman, I spent the afternoon in his *Late Night* office at Rockefeller Center. He was just back from Barbados, looked numb, and wore a beard. He had hired CAA ultra-agent Michael Ovitz to wrangle his fate so that he could sit back and do nothing else but worry about it. We had been talking about relationships with women, his own inadequacies therein, and disappointment in general. Also present were two women he trusts implicitly and relies on always, his executive assistant Laurie Diamond and associate producer Barbara Gaines. They prop him as few others can and are never far away should he sink into mare. He was saying, "My sister told me something a couple weeks ago that I'm trying to apply to my life, which is: Don't have any expectations of anybody and you'll never be disappointed. But you know it doesn't work. But then that makes it sound like I'm the most giving, most understanding, best guy on the shelf. And I know that's not true. I'm no day at the beach, let's just say that. Right, kids?" "I couldn't disagree more," said Gaines. "You are too the best buy on the shelf!" said Diamond. "Um, hmm," said Letterman, unfooled.

ALWAYS HE DRIVES HIMSELF, fueled by demons. He is known for his drive as well as for his driving. Like Leno, he is a car guy, both men keep garages full of classic junk at the Santa Monica airport (although Letterman almost never gets out there anymore). But unlike Leno, who is happiest monkeying under the hood, Letterman just takes the wheel and drives—from which all metaphor springs. For his daily com-



Don Rickles grumbled, "I'm due at Leno's house for dinner later." Said Letterman, "I'm sure you'll enjoy the peace and quiet."

sleeps five hours a night, sleeps hard. "What I don't do is sleep much, but when I'm out, I'm out."

HE IS FORTY-SEVEN, which seems inconceivable, especially to him. Lately, however, he has begun to concede the battle, frequently ending conversations with young staff members by hurling, "I don't know. I'm a fifty-year-old man! How am I supposed to know what you guys like?" It is his neck where mortality besets him most. "I got a bad neck," he says, often on the air, although he asks for no sympathy. He will not speak on the record about his neck. Suffice it to say, he is never not in acute agony, but is also unwilling to pursue corrective measures. If hugged around the neck, he brays like a mule. He lives in abject fear of headlocks. He would rather touch than be touched, although he enjoys nothing more than a woman's touch. Women in his audience regularly ask to kiss his forehead. "The answer to that question," he says, "is, of course, under any circumstances, absolutely, yes!" I once asked him what a guest on his show should never do. "Number one: Don't frisk me," he said. "Don't hurt me physically. Don't get anywhere near my neck. And don't call me Regis."

Still, he goes not at all gently into middle age. He is a fellow who loves the rock 'n' roll, loves it and loves his Springsteen and Seger, Petty and Zevon, Counting Crows and Nine Inch Nails. He was riveted to Woodstock last summer. His office stereo pumps only the hard rock sounds of WNEW-FM. He prefers music to stroke him, never to soothe. (Under no circumstances does he wish to be soothed.) In dramatic opposition to his idol Carson whose idol was Buddy Rich, Letterman hates jazz, regards it as "sloopy." (Within the Ed Sullivan Theater, bandleader Paul Shaffer's forbidden to play that which could be construed as esoteric.) He does, however, fancy bright classical music, is awed by conductor Sir Georg Solti, and is rendered limp by the Puccini aria "Nessun dorma" which he longs to have performed on his show. To his dismay, both Pavarotti and Domingo refused him when they appeared. "Oh, they can do it, for god's sake!" says Letterman, disgusted. "If you're a tenor, *thit's abut you do*."

HIS HAPPIEST MOMENTS are the moments he is not himself. Most days, he yearns to be somebody else, and on many days he actually is. His credit for the recent film *Cabin Boy*, in which he winningly portrayed the part of Oola Salt in Fishing Village, listed him as Earl Hotent. On the phone, he likes to assume disparate identities and expects nothing less from his inner circle of friends, among them comedians Jeff Aronson and John Witherspoon and actress Bonnie Hunt. Pure bliss, for Letterman, is committing crank calls on phone-in programs. His guise obscured and never dropped. On Tom Snyder's old ABC radio show and recent CNBC show, he would become various rural morons, seamless in their stupidity, always diverting the subject if land. In stunting detail, he would discourse on the new line of Mats or share random snacking tips or complaint on air guests on work they'd never done. Snyder indulges him: "No other host might 'Larry King will never put up with me,'" says Letterman. By the time you explain to Larry that you want to talk about sunspots and what they're doing to Bill Clinton, you're gone. He prizes the memory of his first Snyder call: before Snyder ever began catching on to him. "When I got off the phone, I just couldn't sleep. I was so exhilarated by the experience."

Perhaps his most significant performance in this genre came last February: the night Snyder's CNBC guest was

New York Times television reporter Bud Carter, promoting his book *The Late Shift*, which dissected matters Leno Letterman. (Although Letterman made himself available to Carter in the book's reporting, he refused to read it, passages, however, were eventually read aloud to him.) On this night, he was the first caller on the line: a husky-voiced trucker named Don from Kokomo, Indiana. Excerpts:

TOM: How are you tonight?

DON: I'm drivin', man. I'm on 465, it circles Indianapolis, it's an access road, and I got the cruise control

hooked up. I'm doin' ninety-five miles an hour, and I got the lights off. How're you doin', buddy?

TOM: I'm okay, buddy. How're you?

DON: I'm in sand and gravel. When the sand and gravel comes in, they gotta have a man tell ya what's sand, what's gravel. That's me.

TOM: In other words, you pick the sand from the gravel.

DON: Well, not actually pick it. I have a trained eye. We ain't talkin' about cotton. Say, whatever happened to that Doc McMahon? Remember him on that Johnny Carson?

TOM: No, no, no, no, Ed McMahon.

DON: Is he dead? Hey, Tom, I'm callin' to wish you a happy anniversary.

TOM: Okay. Don thanks a million. Watch that speed now, Don.

DON: Huh?

TOM: Don't drive so fast.

DON: Yeah, well, hey, look. I don't tell you how to run your little show.

TOM: But you will.

Months later, Letterman told me that his lone goal in making the call, which went on interminably, was to keep

Carter from talking about him for as long as possible. "I just didn't want to hear them talking about that bullshit," he said, as pleased with himself as I've ever seen.

DEPRIVATION IS A LIFE MOTIV in Letterman's existence. He likes to imagine he cannot have that which he clearly could. Not so long ago, he stood on the deck of coexecutive producer Peter Lassally's beautiful Malibu beach home, staring off into the Pacific. "I wish I could have something like this," he said wistfully. "Dave," said Lassally, "you can." Luxury embarrasses him; he prefers to believe himself underserving. That he reportedly earns between \$10 million and \$14 million per year does not register at all. In his mind, he

dwells but a heartbeat away from failure and ruin. His office in the Ed Sullivan Theater building is large and stark and spartan, nothing on the walls, shelves barren except for two Formula One race-car models and twenty-one bottles of hot sauce. ("I loves the hot sauce," he likes to say.) He allows in his midst no memorabilia or reminders of triumph. Says Diamond, whose outer wall is permitted just one photo of her boss, only because he's disguised as Santa Claus. "He still has that thing: 'It this all tanks, if they get sick of me. I don't want to have to pack up anything, I'm just gonna put my wallet in my back pocket and walk.'"

I recently asked him how he likes to indulge himself. "I'm not indulging myself, that's the thing," he said. To stay preternaturally thin, he consumes one meal a day, always pasta on show days, to carbo load. He hasn't touched alcohol in a decade. (When he guzzles vodka on TV, the bottles contain only water.) Lately, he has even sworn off his beloved cigars, although he keeps a handsome humidor full of Cuban Cohibas behind his desk and hundreds more at home. "I desperately miss them," he confesses, full of regret. "But, man, I'm telling you something: it's a pleasure. I'll go back to one day."

While few mortals have penetrated his Connecticut fortress (not counting deranged stalker Margaret Ray), it, too, is said to be simple and unremarkable, a big barn of a house, free of clutter. Each year on his birthday and on Christmas, head writer Rob Burnett sneaks up to deposit mass quantities of condiments in Letterman's driveway (for it is only with condiments that Letterman will luxuriate). If caught, Burnett will be invited inside to taste spoonfuls of hot sauce, a ritual of endurance that bonds the two men. "I go right up to the Batcave," Burnett acknowledges. "And whenever I'm done at his house, he always hypnotizes me before I leave, so I can't remember how to get there again." He reports that he has seen no signs of extravagance on the premises, except for Letterman's automobile collection. "That," he adds, "and, of course, the monk coats."

"I DON'T THINK WOMEN get over him," says Laurie Diamond, who regularly fields calls from ex-inamoratas resur-facing to reconnect. With women, of course, Letterman is mercury, quick to slip away, forever dispossessing his appeal. Besides housebreaker Margaret Ray, up to fifty other women are known to think he talks directly to them through the television. Many skulk around the theater, one of them managed once to throw Letterman up against a wall, for a long kiss. Likewise, actresses and models—Ellen Barkin, Vendela, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Julia Roberts among them—will flirt recklessly with him on camera and get nowhere. "It's just silliness," he says crankily. "It's like professional wrestling. I mean, how nuts would you have to be to get involved with an actress or a model?" In general, he distrusts glamour, tends to be unnerved by women in makeup, and finds himself drawn only to unadorned wholesomeness and fierce braunpower. "There is something very appealing about smart women, intelligent women," he once told me. "And you can see the problem there: If they're smart enough for me to be interested, then they're not going to have anything to do with me. But I like somebody who's really, really smart. It just helps me overall in trying to turn the gaze from inward to outward."

Those who know him best speculate that he could, on any given Monday, show up for work, having quietly mar-

ried girlfriend Regina Lasko over the weekend. It has yet to happen. It did happen once, long ago, back in Indiana, when he took himself a college bride, named Michelle Cook, for a term of seven years. "For what I put her through," he has said, "I should burn in hell for the rest of my life." Lasko, whose profile is kept so low as to be invisible, is said to be warm, devoted, bright, and patient, now in her fifth year of involvement with Letterman. They met when she worked at *Late Night*, after which she became a production manager for *Saturday Night Live*, before quitting altogether last year. Prior to Lasko, there was Merrill Markoe, the woman who arguably created Letterman, who was *Late Night*'s first head writer, who withstood his life for more than a decade, and who survived to write obliquely about it on occasion. From her just-published book of essays, *How to Be Hap-Hap-Happy Like Me*, Markoe warns women to avoid men who walk fast. "I mean walking half a block ahead of you, no matter how fast you walk, and never slowing down to accommodate you. An informal poll I have been taking for a number of years has convinced me that these fast-walking guys also have terrible tempers and commitment problems."

Before her October *Late Show* appearance to promote the book, Markoe and Letterman hadn't spoken for six years. "We've exchanged some letters, just casualness, casual—I almost said *casualties*, but that's not right," he says. "I mean, looking back at the end of that relationship, it was so unpleasant and mostly my fault. You know I don't know how to do things with women. She was so good and so smart and just so decent, so I feel like, if there's anything I can ever do for her, I would do it nine times. I just don't know how to behave, you know? I don't know how you break up with people."

THERE SITS HARRY JOE LETTERMAN, one of seventeen men at a long table, gray men in suits fixed with boutonnières, in a photograph my mother gave me. (My grandfather is one of the men.) It is a thirty-year-old picture taken at an FTD meeting in Michigan. Bespectacled Hoosier florist H. Joe Letterman, as he was known, looks at once dignified and sweetly goofy, about ready to cut loose. "Look at these guys!" his son was saying, studying the picture and chortling. "Don't they look like the old steel and coal robber barons? He loved going to Detroit for this stuff. On, he was a big talker! What he was not so good at was actually running the store. But this stuff was his lifeblood, you know?"

We were, for the moment, holed up in a conference room above the Ed Sullivan Theater, where he now runs the store. And now he was recalling the annual summer fishing excursions he and his father made to a local reservoir. "We did it right up till the time he died," he said. "It wasn't really a ritual. In those days, he was drinking heavily and I was drinking heavily, so it always seemed like a good excuse to go out and get drunk while you were fishing. We used it for that pretense. I mean, how could you live with yourself going to a tavern with your dad to get shit-faced? So our actual purpose for fishing was to go get loaded. I mean, we never caught a fish. I mean *nothin'*. Not ever."

The widow of H. Joe Letterman has meanwhile made much of her sunset years, having recently earned great acclaim as a Winter Olympics network correspondent. (During the two weeks of her satellite-fed *Late Show* reports from Norway, her son had never appeared more professionally rattled.) The former Dorothy Letterman, mother of two daughters and one son, is now the wife of a decorated



## Read It and Bleep

ON THAT fateful night when Madonna said *fuck* thirteen times, she had her own Top Ten list. Had she not crumpled it up and thrown it away, who knows how it might have changed the course of *Late Show* history. Here, then, for the first time, is Madonna's list.

My Top Ten complaints about Dave:

10. Couldn't vogue if life depended on it.
9. Always asking, "Whatever happened to that nigger Sean Penn?"
8. Stole his nickname, "Material Girl," from me.
7. Before sex, always asks, "Do you have any mustle for this, Paul?"
6. Can't fit entire Evian bottle down throat.
5. Driving isn't the only thing he does too fast, if you know what I mean.
4. His Top Ten lists keep getting lamier and lamier.
3. Calls the cops every time I break into his house.
2. Doesn't look good in a cone bra.
1. He's still a virgin.

World War II glider pilot named Hans. Her son gave her away "so to speak," he says—ten years ago, back home in Indianapolis. As with many complex men, he is who he is largely because of his mother. "It wasn't until my dad died that I realized my mother is the least demonstrative person in the world," Letterman has said. Never certain what she thought of him, he always assumed the worst, manufacturing a persona to match. "For a long time, she told her friends that I was in prison," he said last year, reprising a favorite projection. "It was easier for her to deal with that ignominy than saying, 'Well, he's hosting a TV show.'" In particular, he has held close the memory of her reaction to his woe-tul high school record. "At one point, my grades were so awful that she wanted to enroll me in a trade school," he says. "Dad had less of an interest in it than Mom. It was just that she was very concerned about my lack of academic accomplishment. But, I tell you, it doesn't seem to bother her now when she gets that fifty-dollar check every week."

CARSON HAD WAITED AN HOUR before Letterman showed up at Granita. It was the night before the Emmys, and Letterman was hosting a party for his staff, as he does every September, at Wolfgang Puck's seaside restaurant. Carson had come, an invited guest, to demonstrate his great fondness for Letterman. A couple of years earlier, Carson had turned up at the event and signed for the tab. "I think he was under the impression the dinner was just me and Peter and Morty and our dates," says Letterman. "So he said, 'I'll take care of it.' And it turned out to be eighty people, and it cost him twelve grand!" This time, however, Carson and his wife Alex, were to be treated in kind. After all, it had been a year in which Carson made three cameo appearances on *Late Show*, something he has yet to do for Leno's *Tonight Show*, the implications of which are thunderous. (For Letterman, there was no greater thrill than visiting Carson in his dressing room the night of his memorable walk on last May. "In all those years I did *The Tonight Show*, I have these memories of Carson coming by my dressing room before the show to say hello," he says. "You couldn't believe how cool that was. And so to be able to go up and see him in his dressing room at my show—I mean, the full-circle nature of that was maybe more meaningful than I can explain.")

But now Letterman was late, having spent the afternoon at a racing school out in Ventura. And Carson waited. And Carson does not wait. But he didn't mind waiting. And when Letterman arrived, wild and windblown, the two men fell in to easy conversation, a phenomenon to which neither is especially prone. And when a woman approached the table and commented on Letterman's height, Carson sparked and twinkled and murmured, Carson like, "Oh, he's a large man!" And he kept going, "Oh, he's enormous. That's one big guy." And he did not stop. "God, he's practically a *freak*! Stand up and let us see how big you are!" And Letterman, feeling bigger than usual, which is not all that big, paid for dinner.

MOST PROBABLY HE CAME late because he did not want to believe Carson was there, much less believe what it meant. In his mind, however, Carson is always there, right there, looming gracefully, representing life unachievable. Carson wore power well, wore it effortlessly. "You know," says Letterman, "he's never gonna be on television again. And he shouldn't. He doesn't need to go on television. He's got nothing to prove. I mean, thirty years! And he really seems

contented now; he's getting no less enjoyment out of his life." Letterman cannot fathom such contentment for himself. "I can't imagine myself operating at a different level of activity," he says pensively. "I can't imagine that I hope to be that I could, but..." He shrugs and says, "You know, you run fast, you smell bad." E! Entertainment Television, which now broadcasts Letterman's old *Late Night* shows, was airing a promo in which he says, "It's not so much a television show as a nightly desperate plea for help!" Laurie Diamond tells me, "Whenever I see that I think, 'He's just telling us the truth here. At that desk, he's working out this angst that most of us work out on the couch.'"

Every night before the show, he is led through the catacombs of the Ed Sullivan Theater, up to the stage. On the way, he will toss a football over a pipe, a ritual that indicates whether he will do well or fail, depending on the trajectory of the ball. He takes torment wherever he can find it. One night Madonna tormented him and he prevailed, but he thought he had failed and let down a nation. Only now, a half-year later, had he relented. "She made me uncomfortable for about twelve minutes," he says, "but, good Lord, we got huge attention for it." (He is less sure of his reconciliation appearance with her at the MTV Awards. "It may have been ill-conceived, but at the very least, it made for a lovely photo.") Still, the first thing he does each morning is scour the overnight ratings, surveying his kingdom, taking nothing for granted. One week in September, for the first time ever, early numbers suggested he was being beaten by Leno. During that week, on a night when his studio audience was particularly lackluster, he grew morose. At a commercial break, he looked helplessly at Morty and said, "This is an audience who's watching somebody who lost." In the end, of course, he won the week, but his panic was palpable.

I visited him after his final show that week, a fine romp of a broadcast featuring Sylvester Stallone and Public Enemy. That night, I spoke with a man a jangle, still operating under the notion that his world had collapsed—that he was a loser after all. He was warm and funny, but also antsy, and he couldn't wait to get home. Shortly thereafter, he learned that his winning streak had gone unbroken. The following Friday night, we spoke again—this time on the telephone. To purge doubt, it had been a week in which he pushed himself harder than ever and won handily. Before coming to the phone, he had endured a photo session, an activity he despises. (For optimum results, Barbara Gaines will sometimes stand nearby and chant, "Happy Dave! Happy Dave!") "Oh, I'm exhausted," he said, getting on the line. We talked for a while about his passion for old British films, for Myrna Loy, for tales of unrequited love. He told me of how the original versions of *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Mar* reduce him to tears. "Those'll just drop ya in a minute," he said. After ten minutes, however, his tone plummeted. I broached the subject of anxiety.

"The anxiety in me is now starting to build to unbelievable proportions," he said irritably. "This has been such a long, grueling week for me. I've just had my picture taken, and now I'm still talkin' to you—and you, of all people, must know by now that I have nothin' to say!" Let me ask you a question: Does it sound like I'm namin' up?"

Actually, it did for a second, but he recovered and was able to laugh a little. And then he hung up. Fortunately, Monday would come again in a few days, and he would have an hour to see, better 12.

# Guys AND Dolls

**Gender war is hell, especially when decent manly values are under siege. Just ask G. I. Joe. BY SUSAN FALUDI**

*All in that gigantic fighting machine agree in the selection of that one truly heroic figure in the war. He is G. I. Joe. He and his platoon leaders have given us an example of loyalty, devotion to duty, and indomitable courage that will live in our hearts as long as we admire these qualities in men.*  
GENERAL EISENHOWER, speaking at the end of World War II

**I**T WAS DAYBREAK ON Twelfth Avenue, and the men were already mobilized in a long line snaking down Pier 80, waiting to board the USS Intrepid. Before them loomed the massive iron flank of the mothballed aircraft carrier. On the vast deck sat tanks in various stages of oxidation, along with a few fresher trophies, such as the Iraqi T-72 M1, "captured," as its plaque read, "during the liberation of Kuwait." Most in line were in civvies, though a few wore camouflage combat gear and dog tags. All, as they approached the checkpoint, were issued the essential equipment for



**Old soldiers never die:** G. I. Joe collectors bond at his big thirtieth birthday party.

the skirmish ahead on this Saturday morning Toys 'R' Us shopping bags.

By Sunday evening, nearly ten thousand men from across the country—and a smattering of boys—would pass up the gangplank and be mustered into the ranks of the largest doll party ever held in the U.S., the first International G. I. Joe Collectors' Convention. It was double the number expected and a record for a collectors' gathering, at a time when a mania for snapping up the detritus of baby-boomer kid culture—from Perz dispensers to toy trolls has spawned a whole industry of "collectibles" fairs and publications.

"This beats any Barbie con-



# A man who began collecting G. I. Joes after his divorce said, "You can rely on these guys. They don't ask for much."

vention!" crowed Joe Bodnarchuk, a Joe collector and fanzine editor. "Barbie conventions are big, but this blows Barbie away."

G. I. Joe had turned thirty, and these men had come to New York to salute his progress into middle age. Each had his private reason for being there. Joe had been a childhood soul mate for a boy who'd had no other. Joe was "someone you could trust," Joe had played a surrogate, loving father or protective big brother or better self. Joe signified a period when a private nobody could be a public hero. Joe served as a repository for that fleeting historical moment of consensus over male purpose. Joe provided a talisman that would protect them from... they knew not what.

Steve Wassel, a thirty-two-year-old policeman from New Jersey who has 450 Joes at home and would spend \$250 on more in his first fifteen minutes aboard the *Intrepid*, said that Joe seemed to him the personification of "a time when there was nothing wrong with being a soldier" or he added ruefully, a police officer. Bruce Miller, thirty-something, who'd held down two jobs to make ends meet, said he turned to collecting Joe after his divorce. Joes, he said, were "part of an era you can't repeat anymore," a time of safety. "You can deal with these guys. You can rely on them. They don't ask for much." G. I. Joe Collectors Club president James DeSimone, a thirty-eight-year-old in G. I. Joe regalia from boots to legionnaire's cap, recalled now as a boy, he would tuck G. I. Joe in to bed with him. "He protected me. G. I. Joe was your friend, your buddy. To most of us, that is the significance of Joe."

In *Collecting An Unruly Passion*, Werner Muensterberger observes that obsessions with collecting emerge at the very times when males are struggling with "essential changes in Western man's perspective" challenges to their sense of "manifest destiny." The "experience of not being safe" and the fear "of having been forgotten," he writes, are the recurring themes behind the collector's quest. That search for safety and remembrance has led men to many places: to the curio display cases of Renaissance collectors, to the shelves of Hummel figurines in suburban homes, and now, to the reinforced steel bowels of a docked aircraft carrier.

The gate came up at 10:00 A.M., and the men surged into the carrier's cavernous belly. They maneuvered past tanks and fighter planes and space capsules to the rows of booths where toy dealers hawked identical, albeit shrimpier tanks, fighter planes, and space capsules. The men haggled among the heaps of vintage Joes: West Point Cadet Joes in "full-dress parade" uniforms, Fight for Survival Joes with snowshoes and fur-lined parkas, Atomic Man Joes with camouflage bush jackets and shorts, naked Joes, decapitated Joes, and countless Baggies full of Joe heads, limbs, feet.

The collectors had marshaled all their powers of pageantry and sartorial innovation. There were headdresses bursting with Joes. Collector Bill Siddens proudly passed around photos of his trip to the beach at Normandy, where he reenacted the Allies' 1944 invasion using a cast of G. I. Joes. There was a watercolor painting titled *G. I. Joe Mountain*, a Rushmore-like tribute depicting a cliff with four G. I. Joe heads carved into its side, the handiwork of Vincent



**Boys will be boys:** The sights of the convention included a barroom-brawl diorama and a lasting tribute to G. I. Joe.

Santeimo, author of a G. I. Joe encyclopedia and a thirtieth birthday tribute book, who came with his fiancée Mindy ("I've become Mrs. G. I. Joe," she said), and her ten-year-old son, Jeff (who keeps Santeimo's collection secret from his friends "because they think G. I. Joe is babyish"). Occasionally, in a lapse into reality, you could find a Joe retooled for the murkier battles of modern times. A Joe dressed as a Los Angeles police officer was poised to attack a Joe dressed as a Compton Crip gang-banger, who in turn was poised to set upon a Joe dressed as a German tourist, all beside a sign that read, CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG? On a shelf, a Joe stood clutching a pistol—raised to his own temple.

There was a lavishly detailed diorama of Joes duking it out in a bar brawl, beer mugs frozen in midair, bar stools and cocktail tables flying. The bartender, customized with a borrowed Man from U.N.C.L.E. head, watched as Action Sailor Joes tried to break it up. "In the movies, they always had a bar scene like this where the Shore Patrol would come out," one of its designers, Bruce Miller, recalled.

Like that of most collectors I met, Miller's devotion to Joe was more cinematically than martially based. The protesters from the War Resisters League outside the *Intrepid* exasperate collectors like him to no end, because the protesters don't understand that the collectors are no warmongers, either. "The closest I've ever come to war," Miller said, "is my G. I. Joes." In fact, he and collaborator Tom Marsden prefer to provide Joe with "domestic scenes" rather than battle depictions. Their next two dioramas—Joe's Christmas—Joe's living room strung with lights and decorated with Barbie furniture—and Joe's wedding, to Barbie, of course. "I've already bought Barbie's wedding dress," Miller said.

In designing the bar brawl scene, Miller had for a time considered including "a woman in army fatigues kneeling an army guy." It would have added a "contemporary touch," he said. Too contemporary, he finally decided. What was great about Joe's world after all was its Edenic dreamscape,

free of gender strife. Of course, the real social landscape of World War II America was hardly void of sexual politics, and a bit of that tension had crept into Miller's stage design after all. On one wall, of the bar, he had hung a tiny Rosie the Riveter war poster, and the munitions-pant heroine stared sternly at the carousing mates. A woman who stopped by the diorama said, "Oh, look at that! Men making a mess of it while women do the actual work."

The Joe devotees had expected on this celebratory occasion to see the same unbounded creative enthusiasm from Hasbro, the progenitor of more than three hundred million Joes since 1964. The plastic fighting men had more than earned their keep, making \$2.6 billion for what had once been a manufacturer of pencil boxes. Instead, the Hasbro



representatives here seemed oddly detached—all business, no play. As a result, a gloom hung over the festivities, an uneasy sense among the collectors that even here, in these armored chambers, G. I. Joe was not safe from harm.

The first troubling sign was the relentlessly mercenary atmosphere of the event. On Saturday morning, the collectors found themselves unceremoniously routed directly from the entrance gate to the Toys 'R' Us register to stand in another endless line for the commemorative thirtieth anniversary dolls. That day, the Toys 'R' Us kitty took in more than a quarter of a million dollars, breaking the retail giant's record for single-store daily sales nationwide. "Toys 'R' Us kicked butt," said Michael Herz, the convention's codirector. He was contracted by Hasbro and had no emotional attachment to "the product," as he called Joe. "I do not collect G. I. Joes," he made a point of saying straight off.

The previous G. I. Joe convention, held in 1993 at the Pasadena Hilton, was the last amateur-run show, and DeSimone, its organizer, was disturbed by the tone of this celebration. "This is a commercial show, not a collectors' show," he complained. "There's no contests, no awards. There's no forum for collectors to get together."

But more troubling to the collectors were some rumors making the rounds. The collectors all knew Joe's sales had been sipping for several years. They were painfully aware that today's toy-buying kids were devoted to superheroes with TV series and movies of their own: Power Rangers, Batman, the Terminator. Collectors whispered to one another: Might this birthday party actually be Joe's bon voyage?

Such a fate had befallen Joe once before, they reminded themselves. Hasbro had declared Joe dead in 1978, but two devotees in the company's boys'-toys division had fought valiantly and resurrected their man in 1982. And these two apostles of Joe were still at Hasbro, one, in fact, was now head of the G. I. Joe line. Bob and Kirk—as the two marketing men are familiarly known to the collectors—had a long-

standing and intensely personal commitment to G. I. Joe. Bob Prupis, a man who referred to G. I. Joe as "my love" and "my child," had pleaded so passionately for Joe's reinstatement in 1982 that Hasbro officers at the meeting found themselves choking back tears. And Kirk Bozgian, then commander of Joe's army as Hasbro's vice president of boys'-toys marketing, spoke with awe about how getting to work with Joe was the fulfillment of "my childhood dream." Bob and Kirk were men "who'd fall on a grenade" for their hero, one fan reassured his brethren.

At noon, collectors and toy-trade reporters gathered for the Hasbro press conference. Kirk Bozgian, a buoyant, boyish figure at forty-two, shambled toward the podium in casual wear and a G. I. Joe cap. The lights began to dim. Kirk spoke. "As a young boy, I

played with G. I. Joe and dreamed of West Point. As an adult, I get to command the world's largest army!" He went on to say more, but the collectors didn't absorb much of it. Their eyes lifted in the dark to a large screen overhead and froze there, riveted by the projected image, larger than life. It was the G. I. Joe team—and stenciled across their bodies was the word RETIRED.

The Hasbro video began spin-doctoring the news. Joe wasn't technically dead, a voice-over said; the company was just "reintroducing" him—albeit with a different name, vocation, and physical form. The steroid pumped, superhuman "Sgt. Savage" would be a hero for "a new generation of boy." A World War II soldier who had been genetically altered "cryogenically frozen" and asleep for fifty years—until he awoke in 1994 with massive powers, ready to fight the chieft of Iron Arm Industries, a multinational seeking control of the world's computers.

When the video was over, no questions were taken, and the press conference was hastily adjourned.

The collectors filed out glumly, and some headed straight to the hotel to pack and leave, a day early. "It's the end of the line," Bill Siddens said. And he was right, but he

didn't know how right, and neither did anyone aboard the intrepid, save the Hasbro employees themselves.

**D**ON LEVINE, the Hasbro originator of G I Joe, came up with his progeny's name one evening in 1963. He was watching the 1945 World War II movie *The Story of G I Joe*. With Burgess Meredith as war correspondent Ernie Pyle and Robert Mitchum as a laconic captain, *The Story of G I Joe*, in retrospect, is a swan song, a last rites for the American G I who even then was being eclipsed by the "flyboys," the fighter pilots in their glamorous flying machines. In the opening scene, Pyle bumps along a war-torn road in the back of a flatbed with the G I's of Mitchum's platoon. The grunts are mystified by this media man's attentions. "The flyers are the guys you guys always write about," one of them says to Pyle. "The Hollywood heroes. We're just the lumps along for the ride."

The G I Joe is the infantryman who received, for a brief while, society's anointment as national hero. His moment in the spotlight would be brief and the nostalgia for it endless—much like the abbreviated career and extended mythos of that other American male icon, the cowboy. By 1964, the year of the plastic G I Joe's birth, he was little more than a flickering celluloid memory. By then, Joe's human peacetime counterpart, the good suburban trooper of postwar corporate America, the organization man, was likewise endangered, about to plunge through a series of traumatic social changes. In the year of Joe's conception, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* would also enter the fray.

Dolls are said to smooth over a painful transitional moment in early child development, when children discover the shocking reality of their separateness from their mothers—and seek to cushion the blow by attaching themselves to a teddy bear, a security blanket, a rag doll. It may be that G I Joe bridged a similarly troubling transitional moment in the lives of the men who created him and the society that embraced him—a shock absorber for the brave new world of American manhood, when conformity and loyalty to national institutions, domestic and military, would not necessarily pay social or monetary dividends. The consensus on the role of American men would collapse in the coming years, but for a while it would find sanctuary in toy land.

To little boys, however, Joe presented a revolutionary, if unrecognized, moment in gender play. It was the first time the American toy business had given them a real doll. Not a tiny tin soldier, rigid and unyielding, but a foot-long, "posable," realistic human figure. He could be dressed up in a vast array of outfits and accessories. He was, in short, Barbie for boys. And if the boys who fell in love with him by the millions were unaware of this transgression of gender boundaries, the men at Hasbro knew that they were crossing a dangerous line.

G I Joe was actually the brainchild of Stan Weston, an independent toy licensor. He first proposed such a doll to Don Levine after spying little boys secretly playing with Barbie and Ken. Weston told Levine, "What if Hasbro made 'a Barbie type doll for boys' that they could play with without shame?"

On Levine's walk back from Weston's Manhattan office, he passed an arts supply store and saw in the window a wooden figure with movable parts, the type art students use as a learning aid for drawing the human body. He bought



**A soldier's tale:** New York button salesman Vincent Santelmo has written two books on his hero, including his 448-page magnum opus, *The Complete Encyclopedia to G I Joe*.

one, thinking that a doll for boys could be made even more posable than Barbie, with swiveling elbows, knees, and torso.

But Merrill Hassenfeld, the Hassenfeld brother running Hasbro at the time, was squeamish about the Barbie-for-boys label. "He was concerned about the male-doll situation," Levine recalled. "He was very apprehensive." Levine eventually convinced the chief executive that Joe's identity could be hidden behind a semantic mask. The doll would not be a doll. He would be an "action figure." As Hasbro prepared to release the first round of G I Joes, Levine summoned the whole sales force to a meeting. "I got up and said, 'If we catch any of you fellows calling it a doll, we're never going to send you one piece ever again.' And they never did call it a doll."

To Korean War combat veteran Levine, Joe was to be "the Bill Mauldin-type guy in the ground forces," the embodiment of the common man's hero at the heart of *The Story of G I Joe*. But Joe's days in that purest form would be brief. Though the original Joe is the one we remember—with his olive drab uniform, tiny bayonet, rifle, and boots—he is actually the Joe with the shortest life span. By the time Joe Bacal, of the advertising agency Griffin Bacal, got the account in 1969, G I Joe was already a changed man.

"In 1964, you were dealing with a very different ethos on the military than existed in 1969," Bacal said. As early as 1966, mothers were protesting outside the industry's toy fair. And even before feminists picketing the Miss America Pageant had tossed their bras in an ash can, New York City

grammar school kids had gathered to fling Joe into the trash.

"G I Joe was in great jeopardy during the Vietnam War," Levine recalled. In front of Manhattan's Toy Building, there were women kicking toy people in the shins and yelling, "Down with G I Joe. It's a war toy!" Soon after Hasbro had introduced such modern Joe warriors as Action Marine, Jungle Fighter, it was recalling them. "They introduced them in July 1967, and in six to seven months, they were cut because of the Tet Offensive and the protests," said Barry Goodman, a doll dealer.

In 1969, Hasbro hired Griffin Bacal to remake Joe. The ad agency decommissioned him, and America's Fighting Man became America's Adventurer. In place of dog tags, Joe wore a medallion with the letters A T, for Adventure Team. The letters were arranged with the A on top of the T. A Hasbro executive harrumphed that the logo looked like an upside-down peace sign. To which Stephen Hassenfeld, then a Hasbro vice president, replied, "Good."

The Adventure Team had no enemy as such, so Joe was sent off to fight Mother Nature in commercials, he battled rock slides, grappled with octopi, endured attack by a giant bird, and rescued fellow Joes from white-water rapids. "Toward the end," collector Bruce Miller said, "it became silly. Like Volcano Jumper Joe. His job was to dive into a volcano. I see why a lot of people had disdain."

Disdain, costlier production during the oil crisis, and the arrival of cheaper action-figure rivals led Hasbro to halt production of Joe in 1978. "The competition was coming out with smaller figures, and they looked the same in the ads," said Al Verrecchia, Hasbro's chief operating officer. Collectors maintained that the company's cost-cutting measures had

badly hurt Joe's quality—and hence his sales. Indeed, the mid-seventies Joes on display at the convention were a notably chintzy version of Joe's meticulously appointed former self.

When Hasbro executive Bob Prupis proposed to bring Joe back in 1982, he recruited Bacal to help make his plea. Prupis envisioned a "team of Joes," all comrades and no commander, no media star hogging the spotlight. Bacal held up a Star Wars figure—the hottest action figure on the market that year—and said, "This is not as good a product as G I Joe, but it has a movie." While Joe didn't have a movie deal, Bacal said, they could land him a comic-book contract—*G I Joe: A Real American Hero*—they would call it—and it would emphasize his humble heroism. Then Prupis played a cassette tape of Joe's new theme song. By the tune's end, some executives were dabbling at tears, they agreed to bring Joe back, though at a drastically reduced stature of three and three-quarters inches tall.

The downsized hero's return would be chronicled by Larry Hama at Marvel Comics. Hama got the assignment, as he recalled, because none of the other writers would touch it. "Nobody wanted to do soldiers," he said. At first, Hama also doubted Joe's viability, but he soon found himself compelled by the mission of honoring the disregarded man. "The thread that I tried to carry through the whole thing," Hama recalled of what would become Marvel's longest running licensed comic-book series, was "telling the story from the point of view of the grunt, not the commanding character."

But looking back, Hama can see that even at the start of Joe's second life, the common man hero was doomed. In the first issue, one member of the G I Joe team asked another what their job was. The second Joe responded, "To do the unspeakable and be forgotten." Hasbro's management found this job definition too inglorious—already, they were hearing the siren call of the superhero—and it was changed to read, "To do the impossible—and make it look easy." It was, in retrospect, a telling moment.

**O**NE HEARS CLAIMS that Hollywood stars frequent the G I Joe toy fairs—several collectors insist that Sylvester Stallone and Eddie Murphy have G I Joe collections. James DeSimone maintains that Michael Jackson approached him at a toy show one day—in a "fake mustache and hat"

and "personally bought from me a Jeep and three G I Joes for \$120, even though at the time he was really into Star Wars." But the fact is, the majority of Joe men I met, like the World War II grunts Joe typifies, are lower-middle-class adults from the beleaguered end of the baby boom. The weekend of the convention, I spoke to more than a few collectors whose job descriptions fit under the heading of "temporary" or "seeking employment."

At one of the booths on Sunday, doll dealer Faith Wagner was complaining of a "big difference" between the Joe fans and the women who collect antique dolls. The Joe men "really don't want to pay the bucks." They agonize about prices, one even begged her for a refund "because he didn't have enough money to get home," she said, shaking her head in disgust, her I LOVE JOE earrings jangling.

Jason Williams, a collector scouting Wagner's booth, listened until he could abide it no more. "These guys are struggling," he said softly. He pointed to himself. "I'm the second half of the baby boom. I don't have a lot of money." Williams

who is thirty-one had supported himself until recently in what he gingerly termed "low-level management retail work." That's one reason he buys Joes, he said, it's conspicuous consumption he can manage—though just barely.

Neither could many of the collectors easily afford the \$185 dinner, but they scraped together the funds because they had thought, as one collector said, that Hasbro "was going to honor us little people." When the men finally found the address—the invitations had the wrong street—they walked into a room lined with mess-hall-style tables and folding chairs. They were each handed a box containing a piece of chicken and bottled water. "Colonel Sanders would have been insulted," collector Vince Santelmo said, clutching his throat.

After distributing the C rations, Hasbro managers unveiled the new Sgt. Savage line and showed a promotional video titled *Old Soldiers Never Die*. Usually, Joe fan David Lane Jr. said, the collectors will applaud a new line, even if only out of politeness. But in this case, he recalled, "it was totally silent." Some of the men even booed.

"They were full speed ahead, goggles on, we know the truth, and we're going to slam it down your throats," collector Jeff Kilian said bitterly the night after the dinner. "At the time they care about is the profit margin." He was also upset by a Hasbro oversight: Many of the unsung original players in the creation of G.I. Joe—designers, artists, sculptors—had attended the dinner, but the corporate presenters never acknowledged them. "They were stuffed," he said. To Kilian, the dinner was a "pivotal point," not only because Hasbro was shoving aside loyal G.I. Joe for a flashy superhero, but also because the company seemed to be doing the same within its own ranks.

**E**VEN AVID collectors of G.I. Joe aren't naive about what their hero might be lacking. "G.I. Joe has no media coverage," Brian Mulholland said on the last night of the convention. "And if you're not on television, you don't exist."

It was Kenner that first stumbled upon the Hollywood licensing formula as the ticket to instant success. In 1977, it bought the rights to *Star Wars* figures, and overnight the action figure market was transformed. The company went on to clean up on the licensing rights to, among others, *Batman*, *Aliens*, *Jurassic Park*, *Predator*, and *The Terminator*. "Kenner is the best promotional toy company in the industry today," Jil Krutick, a research analyst for Smith Barney, said. "It has just been a fabulous promotional machine."

The divide between promotion machine and creative toy-making spirit was for some years reflected in the respective corporate cultures of Kenner and Hasbro. "You'd go into Hasbro," Leonard Lee, publisher of *Action Figure News* said, "and all the people would be in casual attire." Kenner, he said, was a suit-and-tie kind of place. The G.I. Joe designers were military buffs, armchair adventurers who pored dreamily over old war maps. Lee recalled how Kirk Bozigan and Vinnie D'Alella, Hasbro's marketing director for G.I. Joe, would return fans' calls and answer kids' letters.

But by the late eighties, the balance of power had shifted at Hasbro from the believers to the financiers. Hasbro Toy president Larry Bernstein stepped aside to develop a line of virtual-reality toys, and the chief financial officer, Al Verrecchia, rose to chief operating officer and unofficial chieftain. Hasbro's new leadership, seeing the company's fortunes sliding, went for a Wall Street solution: a merger and acquisition binge. And one of the companies it collected in 1991 was Kenner.

From that point on, G.I. Joe-ine employees recalled, Hasbro management used Kenner's reputation as a "fabulous promotional machine" as both carrot and stick. "Alan [Hassenfeld, Hasbro chairman] and Al [Verrecchia] had a pet expression," said a G.I. Joe marketing manager who asked not to be named. "It was, 'This is your sister company, and we're all going to work together.' But then their biggest threat became, 'If you don't shape up your product, we'll give it to Kenner.'"

Members of Hasbro's G.I. Joe team say they tried to breathe new life into Joe but that management resisted their innovations, such as larger, more complex figures and strong, new female characters. While the company demurred at these modest changes, the world of action figures became even more competitive and media-driven. Hasbro stopped making cartoons for Joe three years ago, and this year it discontinued his comic book, too. At the same time, the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, a faceless band of seven blandly shaped but super-powered figures, were starring in their own live-action show on the Fox network six days a week and launching a live costumed-performance national tour. By the summer of 1994, Power Rangers, made by tiny upstart Bandai, were the number one selling action figures, having seized, by some estimates, as much as two thirds of the market.

"New programming takes dollars and cents," Verrecchia said of Joe's lack of media presence. "In retrospect, I guess you could say it hurt." But "that's all Monday-morning quarterbacking." In the end, "Joe just didn't measure up," he said. "Joe was looked at as a not very aggressive and strong figure." Verrecchia was probably right. Joe, like the horse and buggy, had been built for different times. Picturing him on a publicity tour was about as easy to imagine as Harry S. Truman on *Arsenio Hall*.

Joe certainly wasn't measuring up financially. In the past four years, sales have reportedly crashed from nearly \$100 million to about \$26 million. Kids today are barely aware of Joe. Product manager Mike Bernstein said that focus groups with little boys were becoming embarrassing. "It was like, 'So, do you guys like G.I. Joe?' And the kids would say, 'Uh, who's G.I. Joe? Is he a Power Ranger?'"

The inspiration for Joe's replacement came when Hasbro heard that a movie was in the works about Sgt. Rock, a World War II comic-book hero, and that Mattel, which had recently unseated Hasbro as the nation's number one toy seller, was rumored to have the licensing. Hasbro management hoped to strike back by issuing its own sergeant hero, first. Delicate discussions soon followed about whether to remove the G.I. Joe logo from the Savage box entirely—a move,



**Genetically enhanced:** G.I. Joe's newest nemesis, Sgt. Savage



the G I Joe team knew, that would kil. off their hero for good (The logo stayed.) But they were having trouble maintaining any connection between Joe and Savage, especially as the latter came to resemble a steroid-enhanced Terminator robot. "Basically the argument was that he was supposed to be able to whip any other action figure," Jeff Thompson, G I Joe's vehicle designer at the time, recalled. "At one point his chest was so big he looked like he had breasts!"

If the G I Joe designers were stymied on their super hero, they were paralyzed by a frenzy of layoff rumors that focused on the boys'-toys division and especially on the G I Joe line. "Everyone was running scared," Thompson recalled.

D-day arrived at Hasbro on August 16, four days before Joe's party on the *Intrepid*. That day, 100 employees lost their jobs. The Hasbro boys'-toys division folded; the G I Joe team was shut down. And the Sgt. Savage line was handed over to a new command—at Kenner.

Hasbro assembled the remaining boys'-toys employees the following day. A senior executive went down a roster and read off people's names and what "teams" they would be reassigned to. Greg Berndtson, the G I Joe design director, was told to report to "the pink and macho team," a euphemism for the dollhouse division. Boys'-toys employees were deployed variously, to work with cuddly dolls, infant rattles. Barney Jeff Thompson was also assigned to the pink and macho team. After a couple of weeks of what he called "painful dollhouse discussions," he quit.

Bob Prupis was pressed into early retirement, which he took and left the next day. Later, he would say, "I have no bitches. They were good to me, financially." They gave him a decent severance package, he said, "but G I Joe had been my love. G I Joe wouldn't even exist today but for me. And you don't abandon a child." But what really rankled Prupis—and shocked others—was what Hasbro did with Bozigan.

Bozigan wound up in Play-Doh.

"What I was told was that it was a wonderful opportunity for me to work on a core business," he said. "It's tough because I grew up with G I Joe. I would not be truthful if I didn't tell you I went through a whole range of emotions. Disappointment at losing a friend. Sadness at the loss." But, he said, "the generals are always sidetracked. You look at Ulysses S. Grant. It wasn't until the final two years of the Civil War that anyone recognized his genius."

As for the future of G I Joe, that is now to be determined by a leader of a different platoon. Tom McGrath, a marketing executive at Kenner's headquarters in Cincinnati. He had worked on several of his employer's licensed action figures: Batman, Aliens, V. R. Troopers—before taking over G I Joe's reincarnation. What sort of heroic role did Kenner imagine for Sgt. Savage? "I don't think the tie to American military is as important today," McGrath said. "We have to make him into a real superhero and not tie him to peripheral elements." He said he doesn't know much about G I Joe's traditional appeal. "You're better off talking to other people about G I Joe's history," he told me. "I really don't even remember playing with him."

Soon after the layoffs at Hasbro, Larry Hama submitted his plot outline for G I Joe Comics Number 157, the final issue. In the story, a member of the G I Joe team whose face had been horribly disfigured in a Vietnam battle wrote a letter to a young man contemplating a military career. "If you are going to be a soldier," the Joe team member counseled, "don't expect to be appreciated."

**A**

FEW DAYS AFTER the convention, Vince Santelmo was back to grunt status himself, making his rounds in the garment district with a briefcase full of buttons. "I've been in the battlefield a long time," he said as we rode a clanking elevator to his first sales call of the morning. "This is my fifth button job."

It was in 1984, when he was twenty-three, working as an assistant cook at a health food restaurant and "feeling down and out" that he rediscovered G I Joe. "In that point in my life, I felt the need to recapture my past," he said. It started the day he wandered into an antiques store and saw a G I Joe alone on a shelf. He couldn't get Joe out of his mind, so he went back and bought him. "And then I realized that there was all this stuff that I didn't have." Like Aquanaut Joe, Spacewalk Mystery set, G I Nurse, Action Girl. Soon he had taken to riding his bicycle up and down the city streets, and every time he saw a secondhand shop, a flea market, "I'd stop my bike and run in and say, 'You have any G I Joes?'"

The elevator deposited us at the seedy anteroom of a dress factory. A bored receptionist peered at Santelmo through the bulletproof glass. "Vincent," he told her, and when she announced him into the microphone, his name boomed dolefully over the dank shop floor. "I don't think there's really much of a future in manufacturing in New York," Santelmo said, surveying the shabby lobby. "It's all manufacturing on a low scale. A lot of people who are very skilled are not getting paid what they should."

Santelmo returned to this theme as we made our way down Broadway. "People are interested in grabbing a piece of the past so they can feel secure because everybody has a lot of uncertainty in their lives. People are getting axed from jobs, no pension. High ranking executives losing their jobs. Anything that can happen, will."

His mood was dark by the time we got to his final destination—Toys 'R' Us. We took the escalator to the second floor and hiked over to an out-of-the-way corner where they kept the G I Joes.

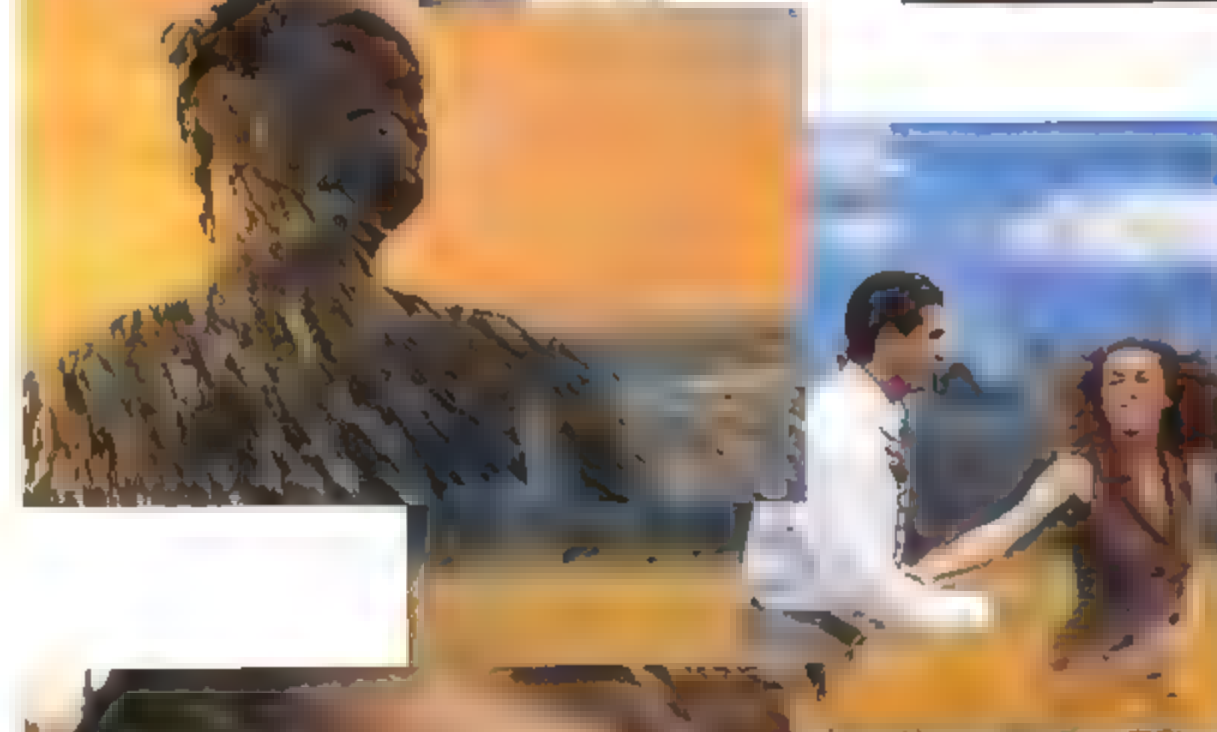
"Look at this," he said, gesturing first toward the cramped quarters of G I Joe and then to the vast expanse of Power Rangers. "Look at how much space they're getting!" He knelt to straighten a few G I Joe boxes on a shelf.

There was a time, Santelmo said, back outside and heading toward the subway, when "G I Joe skyrocketed to fame." But now "there are 150 action figure product lines. He's just one of the guys." Santelmo said he knew how that felt. "When you are home at night, no one knows you are around, the cars are whizzing by. And you're lying there and you just know you're never going to have any recognition."

But there was still hope, he said. A producer had bought the rights to make a film about G I Joe a while back. Nothing had happened in years, but you never could tell.

"When the G I Joe movie comes out," he said, "I'm going to go to Hollywood and get a part." He wanted to be the "communications officer," directing Joes into battle. For now he was on his way to another media appointment. *Queens*, a cable talk show based in the borough of the same name, was going to interview him about his G I Joe collection. I wished him luck and watched as he disappeared down the subway platform, into the crowd. ■

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# JENNIFER JASON LEIGH FEELS YOUR PAIN

BY LYNN DARLING

IT IS LATE in the afternoon in the sleek and glamorous offices of Esquire magazine. A handsome young intern, dressed in a three-piece suit complete with broadened vest and paisley tie, is rushing across the room, fire in his eyes, his only purpose in life to bring cups of coffee to harried editors. Beautiful young women in short skirts fly hither and yon. In the vast wood-paneled inner sanctum of the editor in chief, three antique samurai swords hang on the distressed-copper wall. On opposite sides of an imposing mahogany desk, star writer Selena St. George, dressed in an elegant Ralph Lauren suit, high-heeled Stephane Kelian shoes, and a Barry Kesselstein-Cord necklace—the kind of thing she buys like honbons on her plush salary—and Peter, her casually debonair editor, engage in snappy, erotically charged banter over the story she's written.

"So lose the picture."

"Not happening."

"Half a page."

"I'll let you write the caption."

"Oh, come on—it's crucial."

"It's salad."

"Bullshit. I'm setting up the whole campaign."

"It's a better piece without it."

"You already said it was brilliant."

"I said it was wonderful."

"Is there a difference?"

"Yeah, half a page."

Selena comes around to Peter's side of the desk, her smoky eyes locked on his as she says, "Fine. I only left it in so you'd cut it anyway."

CUT! DIRECTOR TAYLOR HACKFORD yells. He is not happy yet. "Next time, I want you to go with it. I want speed and intimacy."

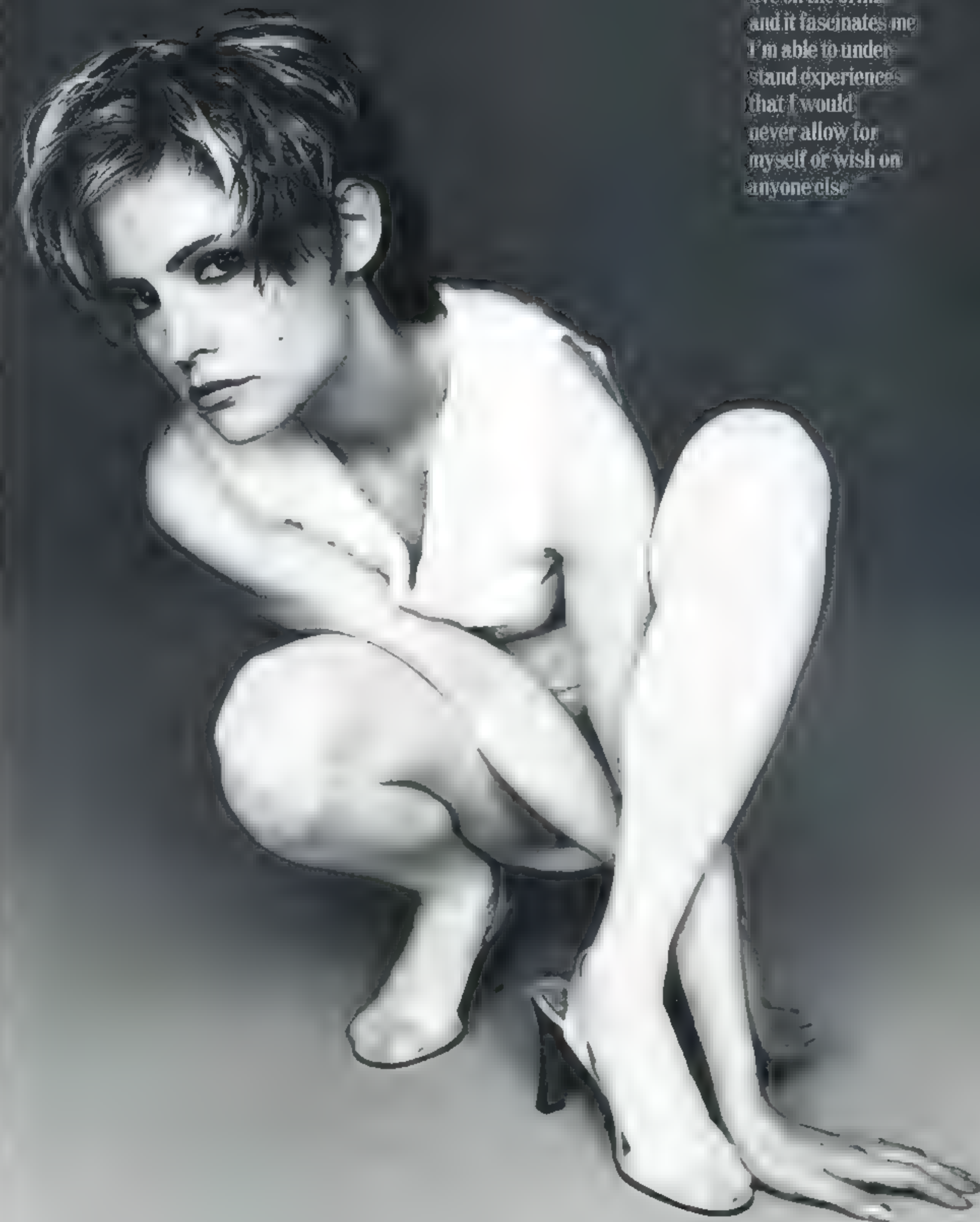
Of course. Speed and intimacy are what we live for at Esquire magazine.

Hackford will get what he's looking for on the very next take, but for the moment the atmosphere deflates. New York City gitz dissolves into a Halifax, Nova Scotia office building, and hyped-up reality sags into the stop-and-go rhythms of a movie being made. Everyone takes a breath, except for the actress playing Selena St. George, who is listening to Hackford with exactly the right amount of barely banked hostility, over-the-edge ego, and adrenaline-charged brinkmanship that deadlines tend to provoke in journalists. Jennifer Jason Leigh hasn't let go of her character.

Then again, maybe the character won't let go of her.

She cracks her knuckles and stubs out one of an endless series of Camel Lights. As an actress, Leigh is much in demand right now. She's just finished playing the title character in *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, in which she gives a bravura performance as the brilliant, self-destructive, alcoholic Queen of the Round Table. Now there are only two days left on the set of *Dolores Claiborne*, in which she plays Selena, the brilliant, self-destructive, alcoholic, and pil popping big-time journalist who comes home to confront the past when her mother is charged with murder. After this, without a hiccup, she'll start work in Seattle on *Georgia*, in which she plays Sadie Foote, the not-so-brilliant but very

The women I play  
live on the brink  
and it fascinates me  
I'm able to under-  
stand experiences  
that I would  
never allow for  
myself or wish on  
anyone else.



self-destructive, alcoholic, heroin addicted would be singer who worships her older sister, the golden girl of the title.

The roles expand a harshly at gallery of nuts and sluts and other bruised women in which Leigh has specialized: Tralala, the platinum haired prostitute in *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and Susie Walker, the hooker sweetheart in *Minority Report* (back to back roles that together won her a New York Film Critics Circle Award); Hedy, the envious psychotic roommate of *Singh*; *White Femur*, the domesticated phone-sex worker in *Short Cuts*; the undercover cop turned junkie in *Rush*.

Bad girls, her characters are often called. Jennifer Jason Leigh plays bad girls. But that's not it. Bad and good, after all, are words without much currency now that the operative moral dividing line is victim or perpetrator. And Leigh's characters, the best of them, are both victim and perpetrator, angry women in an angry time. Her characters are always out there, wounded, self-destructive, vulnerable, placing all the wrong emotional bets, using their bodies as both battering ram and shelter from the blows. She doesn't yet have Jade Foster's Oscar hardware or Winona Ryder's clout. But at thirty-two, Leigh is arguably the best actress of her generation.

SHE IS SITTING OUTSIDE a coffee shop in West Hollywood, dressed in downtown New York chic: a black Comme des Garçons shirt over black Jil Sanders pants, expensive camouflage in Manhattan that stands out like an inkblot in the ever-excessive L.A. sunshine. To see her out of character is to meet a stranger in a constantly shifting light. If you grew up watching old World War II movies on TV, you can see that she is Vic Morrow's kid: the same kind of checked pugnacity is there, but if you didn't, then what you see is a small, pale young woman who has made self-effacement into an art form, except for the eyes, which are piercing and direct. Intense v. private, intensely visceral at the same time, the effect is unsettling: a glimpse of a heart beating under very thick glass.

Leigh grew up in the shabby gentility of old Hollywood, a few blocks from Grauman's Chinese Theater. Her mother, Barbara Turner, a screenwriter, divorced her father when Leigh was two, and her stepfather, an Iranian-born TV director, when she was seventeen. She has spent all her life in the close and precious circle of second-generation Hollywood. She went to the Oakwood School, the kind of place where, she says, the kids write epics but never learn to spell, and did time at Palisades High before dropping out to pursue acting. Although she had seen little of her father by the time he died in a helicopter accident during the filming of *Tomb Raider: The Motion Picture*, she is fiercely devoted to the rest of her family: her mother, her sister, Carrie Morrow, and her half sister, Mina Badie (who has a role in *Mrs. Parker*).

L.A. is a small town to Leigh. She still lives there, in a house whose rooms she painted herself, with a dog named Bessie, her daily life a state of fugue of quietude and order. Dinner parties scare her. A night at the clubs is dearthiness. She likes psychological parlor games and endless rounds of Risk.

It is the very tranquility of her life, Leigh says, that fuels her interest in the parts she chooses. "They're women who really live on the brink. They're at the edge of this cliff and it's just fascinating to me. I'm able to understand experiences that I would never allow for myself because I wouldn't want them or wish them on anyone."

But it's not just the characters Leigh chooses to play—it's the heroism with which she invests them that sets her apart.

Leigh's part, Jennifer Jason Leigh may live in a twelve-step culture and view life's risks as warily as anyone of her generation (she has seen a therapist since she was twenty, doesn't like to drink, and uses the phrase "being human" as if it were a particularly dicey lifestyle choice), but she worships Dorothy Parker.

Which isn't an easy thing to do these days. You have to smile at the idea of what Dorothy Parker would make of the nineties, or the nineties of her (for that matter, a *Woman Who Loved Too Much*, *Smoked Too Much*, *Drank Too Much*, and *Stimulated Too Much*). Leigh's affection for her runs counter to the times, but it is one that she brings to many of the characters she plays, seeing them all through the lens of halved pain and the romance of self-destruction.

*Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* chronicles Parker's tortured tango with life and letters, her sustaining friendship with writer Robert Benchley, and her appalling capacity to absorb the humiliations and hemorrhages of love from the time she was a writer for *Vanity Fair* in the twenties until her death in 1967. Leigh's Dorothy Parker is blindingly smart, vulnerable to the point of masochism, and yet unflinchingly admirable in the protectiveness and sympathy she evokes. She is the one character Leigh is reluctant to abandon.

"I love her," she says. "I just think she's incredibly heroic in many ways and so brilliant and so tortured. She couldn't take care of herself in the most simple ways. She would take out dirty underwear and put it back in the drawer, she ate raw bacon, she threw away a typewriter because she couldn't change the ribbon. There was dog shit all over her apartment, the floorboards were warped from the piss."

It is an oddly endearing rhapsody that could come only from someone who has absolutely no idea of what life in the shoes of such self-annihilation would be like.

But then, that is the mystery that plays continually in Leigh's performances: Is it the attraction of the other, the utterly foreign, night-calling-to-day, or is it the buried child, requesting resurrection, that she's evoking? Pain is a theme she worries like a sore tooth. To her, the pill-popping Selena in *Dolores Claiborne* is "incredibly complicated and in absolute denial." Living on cellophane and Seconal, Selena is hot on the trail of a career-making story when she finds out her mother, from whom she has been estranged for years, has been arrested for murder. She has to go home again to confront the nightmares of her past. "She's very aggressive and very angry, and yet there's so much sadness and so much rage and she doesn't know why, and that interests me," says Leigh.

In *Georgia*, Leigh's fascination with desperate, vital women comes within striking distance of home. The screenplay was written by her mother. Leigh herself is producing the movie. The story turns on the complex relationship between the title character, a singer with a voice from heaven—and her younger sister Sadie, a desperately ambitious second-rate singer and eternal screw-up who is always running to Georgia for rescue. Leigh, whose own life and talent bear strong resemblances to Georgia's, is playing Sadie, who sounds a lot like Jennifer's description of her older sister, Carrie. "My life is similar to Georgia's in the way that it's quiet and fairly grounded and I'm lucky to work," Leigh acknowledges. "I don't live in an extreme way, but that doesn't mean I don't feel in an extreme way." It is Sadie to whom she feels closest.

It is probably Leigh's romanticization of these emotions—the fire walkers that makes her characters burn with such in-



"A person's sexuality has a lot to do with who they are; if you can express that, you see things about a character that you can never see in any other scene."

tensity, such purity, and such sympathy. Then, too, there is also a kind of loyalty going on here, and perhaps even a kind of reparation being made.

"Carrie was a wild child, always was," Leigh says. "She was in a lot of pain yet filled with hope and incredible generosity, and when she would rage, she would rage full out, with no fear. She sucked her thumb until she was fifteen or sixteen but would go anywhere at four in the morning to have the experience. When she was sixteen, she joined a carnival. And although much of her life has been horrifying and frightening, I also really admire her so much. As fucked up as her life was at times, it was incredibly courageous."

Jennifer was the good girl, Carrie the bad one. "Jennifer would sit in her room and play, and her things were always neat," says Carrie Morrow. "I was always loud and aggressive and defiant. When we were very little, we were always very close, and I protected her. But then a time came when I was resentful of her. We lost contact. There were fights. I would threaten her."

But when the bottom fell out for Morrow in the late 1980s, she says, it was Leigh who came to the rescue. "It was alcohol, it was heroin—they thought I was going to die. The people who are in charge of my finances said, 'No more money.' It was Jennifer who got Carrie into the Hazelden Clinic in Minnesota and brought her two children to visit her. "It was the first time I was sober in twenty-three years," Morrow says. "I tried to make amends for all the lies, the dishonesty, the names I called her."

Last summer, Leigh and Morrow took a trip through Mississippi together. "We were just us two, and it was the first time we spent any time together," Morrow says. "I really felt like the older sister again. I saw such frailty in her, and it was nice to feel like, 'Hey, I'm a big girl. I'd lived on the street. I could protect her.' When she plays those characters, she's not vicariously doing it. She's inhabiting the souls of those characters."

It's true that, more than any other actress of her generation, Leigh inhabits her characters so fully that it is the actress herself who seems unreal. As she wandered around Esquire's actual offices, absorbing what passes for ambience there, some editors mistook her for a fact checker working at her first job and trying hard not to be noticed. By the time the cameras roll, she is playing the character from the inside out, having absorbed every physical and emotional detail; she sees the world only through the character's eyes.

Leigh is legendary for her exhaustive preparation before taking on a character. She interviewed dozens of prostitutes before she played Tralala. She ran wind sprints and worked out every day to get in shape for the undercover narcotics agent in *Rush*—though she never tried the drugs her character was hooked on. For Dorothy Parker, she spent hours getting her lockjawed, acid-etched voice down and began working on a short story to understand what the pain of writing was like. She also maintains a daily journal in each character's voice. But she keeps no journal of her own.

To get inside the head of Selena, the Esquire writer Leigh interviewed between twenty and thirty writers for national magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. By the time shooting began, Leigh had four volumes of transcripts providing her with the lives, loves, grooming preferences, and deadline habits of some of the most prominent women journalists in America, some of whom still regret the things they found

themselves telling her. Now there is nothing she doesn't know about Selena, down to the underwear she wears. Harro? expensive, not frilly. "She's not going to dress up for a guy," says Leigh. "Her sex is not intimate or gentle. It's about control."

ROUNDED A CORNER on the Esquire office set, Leigh runs into Aldo Signoretti, the cherubic Italian hairstylist for Dolores Claiborne. "Oh, Aldo," she says, "sing the song I taught you." Signoretti blushes deeply. He takes a deep breath and sings a cappella in a childlike chant: "Every time I see your face, I think of things unpure, unchaste. I want to tuck you like a dog. I'll take you home and make you like it."

Leigh beams proudly. Given her ascetic aura when not in character, her seamless composure, the effect is a little like a Mother Superior applauding a ditty by 2Live Crew. "I love Liz Phair," she says. "She sings great songs for women in angst, a lot of rage but a lot of confidence."

Offscreen, Leigh's sexuality is a cryptic thing, a light in the eye, a cut, of the lip, always present, always evasive. At first glance, she can seem almost neutral, held in check. It is not the asexuality of the untired or the uninterested; it is the caution of the survivor who has learned a thing or two and doesn't plan on visiting the same place twice.

On-screen, she displays a riskier, more honest approach to sex than any other serious actress, not simply in the way she reveals her body but in what she reveals about her characters as well. For them, sex is real, a decision made, and whether it's a weapon or a comfort, pleasure or pain, it changes them, and they know it.

For Stacey, the deflowered virgin in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, it is a way to be loved, for Selena, it is a way to get even, for Tralala, it is rage. "I think a person's sexuality has a lot to do with who they are and why they are, who they are, and if you can express that, you see things about a character that you can never see in any other kind of scene."

When Leigh's Dorothy Parker, in a moment of drunken self-pity, says, "I wish I'd never learned to take my clothes off," you wince for her, understanding every benighted and exalted moment that has preceded that statement. Leigh's characters always know the cost of their sexuality. She herself is not one for whom flirtation is so much sexual content.

"I think at a certain age, I just decided I didn't want that kind of attention," she says. "When you first come into your sexuality, it's such an amazing feeling and you love the attention and you dress provocatively and it's a whole new identity in a certain way, a sense of power and excitement. But when you get into your twenties, for me, I just didn't want that. I became much shier."

In between, she says, "I'd gotten into a couple of bad situations. The way I understood it at that age was that if a man wanted to sleep with me, that must mean he wanted to be with me, when all it meant was that he wanted to sleep with me. And I didn't understand. It seemed to me a great way to get to know someone. It turns out to be a great way not to get to know somebody, and you are not valuing something that is integral to who you are."

Leigh doesn't offer a lot of details. Since she was quoted in *People* magazine at the age of nineteen, cooing about her then boyfriend, a thirty-five-year-old actor, she has been fiercely protective of her private life. But she makes it clear that her own first dance through the sexual minefields was not without injury. During that time, she says, she willed her

"I used to turn off certain emotions. But cutting them off is cutting off something that is about being truly alive, and a lot of being alive is really very painful."



self into an emotional iciness that came back to her when she played *Tralala*.

"A character will remind you that you were there once, and you're not really as far away as you think you are," she says. "Tlalala didn't really feel things. Emotions like jealousy were completely foreign to me. I turned it off, not recognizing that that's what I was doing. But cutting it off is cutting off something that is about being truly alive, and a lot of being alive is really fucking painful."

She still works hard at making herself invisible, though not always successfully. "I think she's the sexiest woman in movies," says Eric Bogosian, who plays Peter, Selenia's editor and married lover. "Her lips, her eyes, her head—there are other movie actresses who are more obvious who don't do it for me, unless I can imagine them in bondage or something."

She handles herself gently, as if the scars were still tender, as if she were in a rehabilitation in which small victories loom large. She is so intensely self-conscious that even an evening spent dancing in the town of Digby while shooting *Dolores Claiborne* becomes a watershed.

When Leigh was six a school teacher watching her dance to a Carole King song called her a "little sexpot." She didn't dance again for eleven years, and even now it's an emotional gamble. "We went to this junky disco, which I thoroughly enjoyed because I like to dance not in the clubs but in little bars in small towns. One of the women on the crew came up to me and said, 'You're so sexy when you dance.' And I thought 'I don't care.' Now I'm dancing for myself."

She tells this story with such pride, such quiet triumph, that for a moment it is impossible to connect her with the actress who swaggered bare-breasted through a bar in *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, yelling, "The best tits in the Western world," and shepherded her character through a gang rape so harrowing it never fades from memory.

JENNIFER IS WALKING along a tattered section of West Hollywood, looking for clothes that her next character, Sadie, will wear. She heads for an antique-jewelry store she knows well: a place where she buys her own jewelry. Leigh loves the Victorians in pieces, the intricacy, the meticulousness of their craftsmanship. She favors rings and bracelets. She doesn't wear earrings. "I don't like the idea of being pierced in any way," she says. She finds a sixties style jade and-silver necklace perfect for Sadie.

## When She's Bad, She's Better

**Last Exit to Brooklyn, 1990.**  
Ligh as the hooker Tralala  
Her now-infamous rape  
scene reads so brutal many  
filmmakers balked out



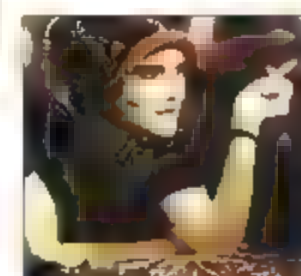
Single White  
Female, 1992

As Hedy, the  
room mate from  
hell She kills  
puppies she  
puts spike heels  
through men's  
eye sockets



### Short Cuts, 1993.

East Asians type  
Laugh is married with  
children performing  
phone sex while  
diapering the baby




**Mrs. Parker and the  
Vicious Circle, 1994.**

Channeling the voice of droll despair is the self-destructive writer Donchy Barker.



Dolores Claiborne

**1996.** In the film  
made role with  
Eric Bogosian, the  
held smile and  
profoundly neutral  
Esquire, after  
Setena St. George



Leigh doesn't yet know who will follow Sadie. As she gets older the roles will change; there are few enough for intelligent actresses. The emotional boundaries she pushes will also change. The danger if there is one for Leigh comes when it is time to portray the women who emerge from the other side of the fire, to show what happens after you commit suttee on the pyre of your own delusion and desire. As Fitzgerald discovered, the cracked plate knows more than the uncracked plate. But it's not necessarily something worth talking about.

Is it possible for someone so fascinated by unhappiness to be happy? In her own life, Leigh seems cautious about the amount of potential emotional pain she is willing to court. While there have been men she loved enough to live with, she has never been married, has never had a child. "I want to want children" is as far as she'd go in that direction, as she prepares one afternoon to visit her close friend Phoebe Cates and her husband, Kevin Kline, whose newborn second child Leigh will see for the first time. She seems to inhabit an entirely different planet from the egregiously fecund Demi Moore or the deliciously blissful Annette Bening. Leigh cautions herself a romantic; she believes in the possibility of a lifelong love. But she has more in common with a line of cinematic vestal virgins that stretches from Katharine Hepburn to Holly Hunter, actresses for whom the pleasures of the domesticated heart seem particularly at odds with their art.

Is Jennifer Jason Leigh happy now?

The question stardles her "Um, yeah, I think, h, yeah—it's a qualified yeah. I think ultimately I am."

There are little things that make her happy, she says, and the one she chooses underscores how lightly it

tached she is to the exasperating daily tangles that anchor a life. "This is so stupid, but when my dog chooses to eat" and here she giggles at the sheer pleasure the memory brings. "It's just like this great moment. Because I put out her food in the morning, and then she can eat anytime she wants, and the idea that she actually chooses whatever time it is to eat is just an amazing thing to me. It makes me really happy that moment—it's like, wow! Bessie's eating now. Why is she eating now? Is she just so happy? How does she choose the moment? You hear the crunching sound and you know that she's content at that moment. There are other times when I think it's lucky I don't own a gun. But they pass."

# Christmas Club



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# The Science Club Serves Its Country

On otherwise uneventful mornings in the early fifties, a group of “retarded” schoolboys gathered for a very special breakfast—cereal doused with radioactive isotopes. Some forty years later, the question is being asked: What, if anything, was wrong with the meal?

By Chip Brown

**H**ISTORY is written in the conceit that the present can be delineated from the past and moral judgments rendered with righteous conviction, but the past at the Walter E. Fernald State School has a ghostly kind of presence—a half life if you will—that blurs distinctions of then and now. Past isn't past. It looms vitally in the smell of archival dust. It lingers in the boarded-up air of redbrick dorms. It persists in the anachronistic theory of the school, itself the oldest institution for mentally deficient people in the Western Hemisphere, a place predicated on the idea that it was best to segregate the “feebleminded” from mainstream society. Even the weedy stillness of the swing set evokes another time—most of the students who lived here as children have moved away or are winding out their douglases or have died. Autopsies are no longer performed in the library basement, and yet a kind of darkness still inheres there, upstairs the shelves sag with books written when *moron* was a professional term, and the sheet music drawers hold thousands of glass slides of human brain tissue.

The past lives on in the mind's eye, too, and in this sense, there is still a truck wending its way over the hills of western Massachusetts. It's the late 1940s. It's the early



**Sign of the times:** Students at the Fernald school circa 1950, alumnus Austin LaRocque holds the Atomic Energy Commission's ubiquitous symbol for radioactivity.

1950s. The truck is pulling onto the campus. It is laden with milk from a state dairy, milk for boys who are grown now but in some ways are still twelve or seventeen, waiting as they once waited in the Boy's Home for their breakfast, a “special breakfast” of hot oatmeal with milk. Many are unable to read or write. Many have IQs of kids half their age. But among the thousands of disordered, unwanted, intractable abnormal children at the Fernald school—generations with profound mental retardation, monster-faced kids once called “gargoyles,” kids with hydrocephalic heads, extra arms, extra eyes (legislators touring Fernald during budget season would sometimes get sick to their stomachs)—the breakfast boys are the elect, the brightest, the most normal. It is no trouble for them to give a good urine sample. They are members of the Science Club, a club whose very name resonates with the signature duplicity and innocence of the time. The boys enjoy privileges such as the occasional gift of a Mickey Mouse watch or a trip to Fenway Park or a holiday dinner at the faculty club of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—privileges

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS RUCK





**The institution:** The Walter E. Fernald State School

that will be denounced one day as coercive inducements. The adults in attendance are doctors and scientists, self-respecting professional men, certain of their creeds and prerogatives. They are watching over the boys. They are also watching over the milk. Many advantages set them apart from their young friends, not the least of which is the knowledge that they must not drink the milk.

**T**HIS tableau—this a most primal scene with its pretense of friendship, its milk adulterated with radioactive calcium and a context that even now remains ambiguously patched between the innocuous and the sinister—was at the center of an ethical inquiry last winter in the Boston area. It was an unusual bit of business. It lasted four months, cost the state of Massachusetts \$10,000, and raised as many questions as it settled. It was precipitated by a headline in *The Boston Globe* the day after Christmas: **RADIATION USED ON RETARDED**, but the story written by reporter Scott Allen owed much to the curiosity of Sandra Marlow, a sixty-two-year-old former part-time librarian at Fernald.

The Fernald school had been founded in 1848 by Samuel Gridley Howe, the prominent social reformer and husband of the famous suffragette and antislavery firebrand Julia Gridley Howe. Marlow had started to poke around the attic of the administration building in 1992, hoping to find correspondence from Howe's circle of abolitionist friends or perhaps even a letter from Thoreau.

What she discovered was a box of reprints of an article in the March 1984 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition*. The main author was Felix Bronner, a doctoral candidate under the supervision of Professor Robert Harris, a distinguished nutritional biochemist at MIT best known for developing the U.S. Navy's abandonment ration and a powdered soup that fed millions in Europe and Russia after the Second World War. Bronner's article noted that nineteen institutionalized boys—Marlow correctly assumed they were from Fernald—

had been given a radioactive calcium tracer mixed "intimately" with milk. Marlow was a student of America's nuclear past. Her father, a colonel in the Air Force, had flown through atomic mushroom clouds during the Bikini atoll bomb tests and in 1977 died of a rare form of leukemia. When the archive yielded up a document from the Atomic Energy Commission, she felt she was on to something. "I knew that the AEC was not interested in helping people who were retarded," Marlow recalled. "I saw a connection between the experiments and what the Nazis did. I saw the experiments against the whole backdrop of lies—the silence of the government, the silence of the professionals. The experiments were a part of the past that was affecting the present."

Certainly, they were old news. They had been publicly discussed at symposia, and their write-ups had been yellowing on the shelves of open scientific literature for forty years. But a story cannot be separated from its context. Last winter a thing radioactive had acquired an unexpected currency. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary had opened the government's files on radiation and human testing, prompted by a series of articles in *The Albuquerque Tribune* about people who had been injected with plutonium without their consent in the 1940s. President Clinton had established an advisory committee on human radiation studies. Suddenly, the public and the government seemed eager to address the moral implications of America's cold-war radiation research.

Was there a new ethical awareness forming in the public consciousness, or was this another media abetted witch hunt targeting some outrage from the past in order to divert attention from outrages in the present? The *Globe* story had disclosed that scores of adolescent boys in a "science club" had unknowingly been given radioactive calcium and iron tracers in a series of nutrition experiments in the 1940s and 1950s. It was not clear what harm the boys had been exposed to, but it was clear the studies were nontherapeutic, that is, they were designed only to add to the knowledge of human nutrition. The radioactive tracers were needed to gauge the effect of compounds called phytates on the absorption of iron and calcium. Phytates are found in oats but not in wheat. The overall conclusion of both sets of studies was that phytates were nothing for oatmeal eaters, or makers, to worry about.

Beyond the possibility of physical harm, there was the ethical issue of consent. Had the subjects or their parents or their guardians been fully informed about the nature of the experiments? It seemed from the documents that the parents who had been asked to give their consent by the Fernald school's superintendent, Malcolm Farrell, and medical director, Clemens Benda, had not been given the full story. They had not been told that the "special diet" being prepared for their kids included radioactive calcium. (No letters of consent could even be found for the earlier iron studies.)

From the vantage of the present, in the atmosphere of distrust and outrage stirred up over the egregious plutonium experiments, this business at the Fernald school, looked bad. The day the story broke, network-TV crews were setting up cameras outside the school. Calls were coming in from journalists in Austria, Bolivia, and Japan. Former Science Club members were demanding to know what health risks they had been subjected to. One newspaper cartoon showed a box of irradiated, lead-lined cereal called Fernald Frosted Flakes. Nazi hunters came sniffing around, suspicious of Benda's German background. A state legislator called for a ban on all biomedical research on human subjects. Officials

## The parents had not been given the full story; they hadn't been told that the "special diet" prepared for their kids included radioactive calcium.

at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were scrambling to establish what role their institutions had played in the research. MIT president Charles M. Vest issued an apology for work done under the aegis of MIT. More documents were unearthed. It appeared that more than a hundred Fernald students had been test subjects in at least six experiments involving radioactive material. "The experiments reek of wrongness and arrogance," the *Globe* said in an editorial. Officials at the Department of Mental Retardation, the state agency in charge, needed to respond quickly. If the students had been harmed forty years ago, they should be told so and examined by doctors. Should they be compensated? Who was liable? What actually had happened? Department commissioner Philip Campbell needed answers. Three days later, he created a task force, a kind of jury whose job would be to figure out what had happened, to whom it had happened, why it had happened, and whether it could happen again. Fifteen people were corralled: an engineer, an FBI agent, three lawyers, two medical doctors, one bureaucrat, two reverends, a mother, the foremost scholar of mental retardation in the country, a congressman, and, to bring history full circle, two former members of the Science Club: Charles Dyer and Austin LaRocque. The group's job was, in essence, to put the past on trial.

**F**OR forty years, Austin LaRocque hadn't known what had been done to him, and now—now that all the news had come out—he did. He was still having a hard time, his ideas about himself, the story he had lived with, had collapsed. On January 13, 1994, he went back to the Fernald school to testify at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Fernald was his alma mater, a hard place some times. It was where the medical staff had hung their diagnosis of "moron" on him (today he'd be called learning disabled)—but it was his home, too, where he had lived his teenage years and where his participation in the Science Club had made him feel special. On y now it was making him feel like a fool and angry. The newspapers were calling him retarded. He couldn't read or write except in the most rudimentary fashion, but he wasn't retarded. He was a grown man of fifty-three with a fine head of upswept gray hair. He had a wife and a family and a house and a job.

At the witness table, he sat next to the sort of educated big shots who usually made him tense: professors and federal officials. In front of him were the chairman, Senator Edward Kennedy, and Congressman Ed Markey, who had disclosed government radiation tests in 1986 and was now questioning a Dr. Brian Brill about the consent forms used in the Fernald nutrition studies. LaRocque listened carefully. Dr. Brill was a professor of nuclear medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

"Was it deceptive, Doctor?" Markey asked, "to leave out the word *radioactive* on the consent forms?"

"Oh, yes. I think that in retrospect it was," Brill replied.

"Was it deceptive by the standards of the time to leave out the word *radioactive*?"

"Apparently not, or else they would have kept it in there," Brill said.

That set Markey off. "Oh, Doctor, the reason they left out the word *radioactive* is that they knew that the word itself was radioactive. They kept it from the parents. They kept it from the students." And as if Brill were guilty of something other than a precious view of his profession's ethical integrity, Markey laid on the third degree. "Why don't you just admit it?" he said. "You can admit it now. That was the period. That was the time."

They went on for a while, then LaRocque spoke up.

"Can I ask one question, please?" he asked.

"Sure," said Senator Kennedy.

"To this gentleman here?" LaRocque said, turning to Brill. "Nothing personal. But if you had a son here, would you have allowed this to happen, knowing what you know about radiation?"

The professor tried to sidestep. "Well, I have—you know many of us in medicine when we are investigating new phenomena, will take radioactive tracers and study ourselves. I've done it so many times."

"But you didn't answer my question directly," LaRocque said. "If it was your son, would you have accepted it?"

"Knowing what I know now, I would," Brill said. "But at that time, I don't know."

But the crowd in Howe Library had burst into applause. It was a glittering redemptive moment. A man once classified a moron was cutting through the complexities of ethical life, the smug cant about many of us in medicine, to put the abstractions of the debate in human terms.

Maybe that's a knack you learn when you're one of seventeen children. LaRocque's father was a truck driver and an alcoholic who lived off child-welfare subsidies. More kids, more money. LaRocque's mother raised five of the brood but sent the rest to foster homes. Austin, her third-born, was dispatched to the Fernald school in 1952, when he was twelve. He had blond hair then, blue eyes, good teeth; he was obedient and friendly and constantly looking for affection, but he could not read or spell or write his name. His IQ was 65. He was placed in the Boy's Home with about one hundred kids.

"They ran a tight ship in Boy's Home," he recalled, sitting in his living room in a duplex in Beverly, north of Boston. "You could speak only when spoken to. If they wanted to punish you, they'd make you scrub the floor by pulling a hundred-pound dog around on a rope."

He washed his own clothes, and sometimes when there was a window broken, it got so cold at night his shirts froze. But he liked the place. It was clean. He played in the drum and bugle corps. He mastered the operation of a printing press. He couldn't read a book, but he could set type. His parents never visited, but one of his sisters lived at the school, and they were close. He was discharged in 1961 at age twenty-one. He found work in a hospital where he met a woman named Rose, and two years later they were married. They have three children today. LaRocque works as a maintenance man with eighty apartments to look after, he does electrical work, painting, and carpentry.

## "The truth is that the experiments had been authorized," says the investigator. "They'd been announced and carefully scrutinized."

As he remembers it, the Science Club would meet in the living room on the first floor of the Boy's Home building. There were usually a couple of dozen kids present. Once you were in the room, you weren't allowed to leave. "To me, the Science Club was an honorable thing to be in," LaRocque recalled. "I didn't have any doubt of the school nursing me. Whenever I spoke about the Science Club, I felt it was as if I'd done something good." He remembered peeing into a little white cup with a round cap with his name on it. The meals came on a brown tray with his name on it.

After the news about the radioisotope experiments came out, LaRocque lost something he had been proud of. He felt betrayed. "What these people did was morally wrong. It wasn't an honorable thing. Some of the boys were in the school because they lost their parents in wartime, and you're using their children? These kids were put there to be helped, not abused. They were there for their own best interests, not to have their bodies guinea-pigged on."

LaRocque's wife, Rose, brought out lunch—fried eggs, orange juice. She put in a tape of her husband's appearance on *The Montel Williams Show*, a show that managed to lump the nutrition studies in with the experiments in which people had been injected with plutonium. The caption on the screen said LaRocque had been injected with plutonium. Montel Williams was getting lathered up. "Why aren't all the persons involved in this being tracked down and shot?" he said.

LaRocque has a lawyer and is considering suing MIT and the Department of Energy, which provided the isotopes. He doesn't blame the school, he blames the scientists and the late superintendent Malcolm Farrell, whose sins of omission are now clear to him. He's been assured the doses were not harmful, practically the equivalent of a cross-country flight or two, but he wonders if the radioactive milk didn't have some health effects after all. He had to have an egg-size lump taken out of his skull. Other Science Club alumni he'd been in contact with had reported strange blisters and similar lumps. If the experiments were so harmless, why wasn't there anything in his file? A letter, a document? There were all kinds of letters in his file. But nothing about radioactive milk. Nothing about anything having to do with the Science Club. In fact, the task force would not even be able to find documents that showed Austin had ever been a member of the club.

**E**IGHT days after the story in the *Globe*, the Task Force on Human Subject Research met around a mahogany table under the high, trussed ceiling of the Fernald library. Austin LaRocque and fellow Science Club member Charles Dyer were part of the panel. Emotions were running high. There was outrage at what had happened. Those members who were parents of retarded children or advocates of reform were suspicious of the department's effort to investigate itself, even though most of the main players in the earlier regime were dead.

Chairman Frederick Misilo, a thirty-nine-year-old lawyer and deputy commissioner of the Department of Mental Retardation, had come to public office as a reformer.

He had made it plain that their purpose before passing judgment was to develop facts: the who, what, when, and where of the past. At the same time, Misilo had been outraged by the *Globe* reports of the experiments. Why did the scientists go to places like the Fernald school to find their test subjects? Why didn't they go to Milton Academy or Mt. Hermon? Why was it always the poor kids, the weak and defenseless members of society who got the Fernald Flakes?

The task force divided into working groups. An advisory committee was established of some twenty experts in the fields of radiation, epidemiology, the social and medical sciences, and bioethics. And then the detective work began. The bulk of it fell on the project coordinator, the Reverend Doc West, who had volunteered to take on what was initially a nonpaying job.

A compulsively empathetic feminist in her midforties, West had an eclectic background. She had graduated from a Pentecostal Bible college; she had a master's in rehabilitation counseling; and, as Boston's first commissioner of handicapped affairs, she'd made Faneuil Hall wheelchair-accessible. She was plagued by an array of illnesses and disabilities from chronic fatigue and lupus to Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and fibromyalgia, which made it difficult to walk. She had used a wheelchair, kept an oxygen tank in her apartment, and gobbled Motrin.

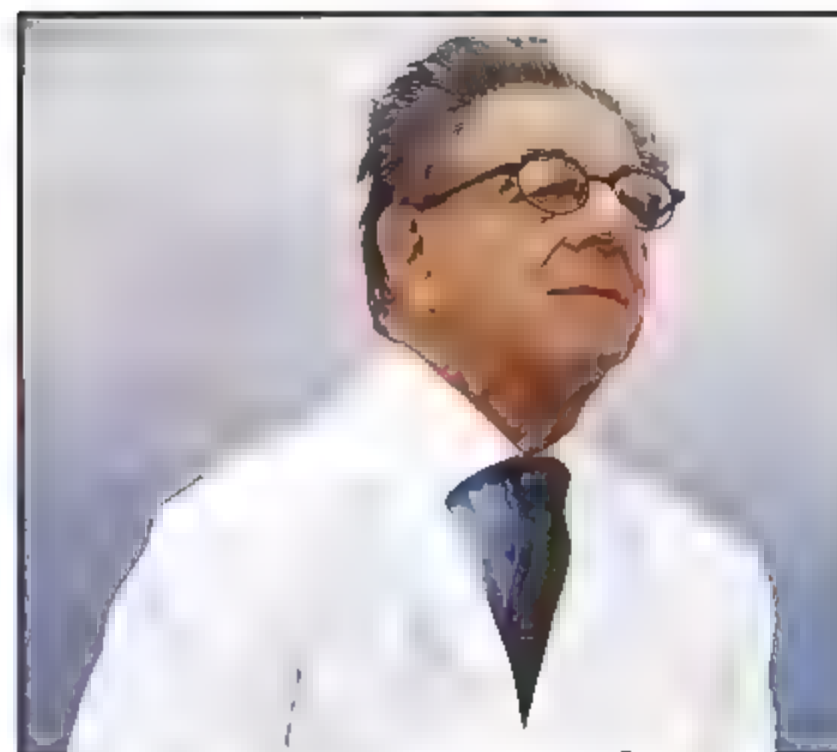
It snowed a lot that winter, and sometimes when her legs were acting up, her husband, Bruce, had to carry her newlywed-style into the unheated storage room that served as her office at the Fernald library. In the first month, she worked seven days a week, twelve or more hours a day, starting at six in the morning. She read 532 books and articles. She sent out letters to twenty-four area hospitals requesting that they search their records. She donned a mask and rubber gloves and crawled through attics and basements. Once she had to go to the emergency room because she couldn't breathe.

"What were you doing?" the nurse asked.

"Research," she said.

Some six hundred case files were brought out of storage. One breakthrough came when Harvard and MIT sent over boxes of files, a bigger one still, when West learned that the estate of Clemens Benda was about to be sold off. West contacted Benda's son, who also sent over files. Dr. Benda was the former Fernald medical director and professor of neuropsychiatry at Harvard. He had been born in Berlin and had come to America according to a letter he wrote seeking a commission in the U.S. Medical Air Corps in 1942 because his opposition to Hitler had cost him his job as editor in chief of a German medical journal. In 1935, Benda was listed as a coauthor of many of the scientific papers written from the research at Fernald. He was also, as West was overjoyed to discover, a meticulous record keeper.

The 1946 iron study was the first time outside researchers had been invited to Fernald. West was able to identify all seventeen subjects. J. David Litster, the dean of research at MIT, calculated that the largest exposure received by any of the subjects was just a little more than



The researcher: Felix Bronner says he'd do it all over again.

three hundred millirems, which is the amount of natural background radiation that task-force members themselves would be receiving if they spent a year in the Boston area.

The doses in the calcium-tracer studies were much smaller. There were seventeen separate experiments done over the course of three years starting in 1950. By cross-checking the weight and date of birth statistics in Felix Bronner's doctoral thesis with Fernald records, West was able to identify all fifty-seven of the subjects. Litster calculated that the radiation dose was much smaller, being at its highest about what you'd receive on a round-trip flight from Boston to California.

Litster's calculations of the dosimetry were supported by the task force's independent experts. The government standards over the years have been scaled way down. What was considered safe in the 1940s—when you could look at your foot in the shoe-store fluoroscopy machine and radiation was used to treat ringworm and acne—is not considered safe today. As West pointed out when she began drafting the task force report, there are some people who feel that there is no such thing as a safe level of radiation.

While Doc West was combing archives for names and dates of birth and weights, she was also trying to understand the tenor of the long-gone past. She stayed up late reading histories and monographs on informed consent, radioactive testing, bioethics, eugenics. She was trying to comprehend a time when norms and standards were different and some people had more rights than others. The easy route, she knew, would be to criticize the ethical failures of the past, but it seemed as important to understand the attitudes of the scientists and the school administrators as to condemn them—that one didn't have the right to condemn without understanding. Farrell and Benda were dead, unable to explain or defend themselves. Just a few of the other scientists were still around; she had spoken to four of them. They had been raked in the press.

"My fear was that the work of the task force would turn into vigilantism," West recalled. "People's anger at the deception and the harm was so great—the very authorities that were supposed to protect us were perpetrating the abuse. At

first, I was willing to claim evil and stomp it in the eye when I found it. But I didn't find evil. I only found ignorance. I was confronted with the truth that the nutrition experiments had been authorized. They were bona fide, detailed research. It wasn't the government sneaking in behind doctors' backs. They had been announced, they were carefully scrutinized. I had to acknowledge that there is a difference between government studies focused on radiation and biomedical research that is focused on aiding humanity."

Two months after the hearing in which Congressman Ed Markey had badgered Dr. Brill, Harvard sent over records to the task force on a series of thyroid experiments done with radioactive iodine at the Fernald school and at the state school in Wrentham. Some of these were cold-war experiments. The dosages were much higher. But in some of the experiments at Fernald, West saw the letters of consent sent out by Benda did in fact disclose the use of radioactive material. In 1951, for instance, Benda had written to a mother of a Fernald resident to explain that the protocol involved "a very small amount of radioactive iodine" at a dosage level "approved by the highest authority," which was most likely a reference to the God-like Atomic Energy Commission. As the experiments overlapped the calcium-tracer studies, the more completely informed consent letters contrasted sharply with the calcium-isotope consent letters, some of which are dated *after* the iodine letters. That fact would suggest Benda and company considered the dosages so low as not to be worth mentioning—a conclusion that is precisely the opposite of Markey's oh-doctor-the-word-itself-was-radioactive thesis.

But well before the news of the thyroid experiments had come out, the task force had split into two factions, and Doc West, seeking to understand all viewpoints, got caught in the crossfire.

**F**ELIX Bronner, who had been cast as one of the Mengele manqués of the Fernald affair, had the strange experience of seeing a paper he wrote forty years ago resurface on the evening news. He had kept a low profile, but when I reached him on the telephone, he was eager to defend his work and impatient with suggestions that there was anything amiss about it. "Look," he said several times in exasperation, as if he couldn't understand how there could be doubt about his point of view. The studies he ran at Fernald had led to his doctoral thesis at MIT, "The Effect of Food Phytates on the Absorption of Radiocalcium in Human Beings"—and had launched his academic career. Now seventy-three years old, an emeritus professor of biostructure and function at the University of Connecticut Health Center, he had studied under Professor Harris, who ran the nutrition lab in the MIT department of food technology. Harris, who died of Alzheimer's in December 1983, steered a \$1,500 grant from the Quaker Oats Company to Bronner.

"I didn't know—and I'm not sure whether Dr. Harris knew—that the correspondence with the parents had failed to mention the isotopes," Bronner recalled. "We were totally convinced that the amount of radioactivity we gave the children was negligibly small. The amount was so small, it was hard to get results. The notion that this kind of human experiment could be likened to what was done in concentration camps is preposterous."

Indeed, the levels are within current federal standards. But why did they use the children of Fernald? The answer



**The subject:** LaRoque doesn't trust anyone anymore

seemed to be that they were available: the school, the state of Massachusetts, in effect, had made them available. The kids were conveniently close to Boston. Bronner was living in the city with his wife and commuting to the campus. At Waltham in a dark red 1948 Plymouth he bought from his cousin. The calcium isotopes were shuttled over from MIT where they were mixed. Bronner got to know the boys in his experiment. "I had no feeling that these were mentally inadequate people," he said. "They were sentient human beings." He took some of them to a Red Sox game. He attended one of the Science Club dinners at the MIT faculty club. As a researcher, he has always felt his ethics bored down to: Don't do any harm; put yourself in the other person's position; and ask yourself, "If you would do the experiment on your children,

Well, would he?" I asked.

"Of course," he said.

"Would he do the same research?"

"I would. I trust let me," he said.

He couldn't remember whether it was Dr. Harris's idea or his—none of them at any rate came up with the idea of the Science Club.

**ACTIONS** on the task force had surfaced almost immediately.

On one side were the parents and advocates like Richard Kratt, a former FBI agent who had a retarded son, and David White Lief, a lawyer who was the chairman of the Fernald Human Rights Committee. Their outrage that the experiments had occurred and their concern that the state not try to whitewash the past were shared by four other members. On the other side were the medical members and academics, who viewed the events more dispassionately, whose view in some cases was tempered by actual experience in the era under review. Gannar Dybwad, professor emeritus at Brandeis and one of the country's foremost scholars of mental retardation, actually knew Farrel and Benda.

Dybwad saw the hyperbolic criticism of the nutrition ex-

periments as misplaced, like worrying about a cut on your foot when you're having a heart attack. The general conditions of life at Fernald were probably as much a violation of human rights as the nutrition experiments.

"I absolutely object to having people who don't have a free will subject to medical experiments," Dybwad said. "My point is that what went on in the institutions in those days, what they did routinely was much worse than any breakfast food. The people in the Science Club were in the elite—that's the sad thing."

Dr. Allen Crocker, professor at Harvard Medical School, had also known Benda. "He was a person with vigor and ambition and hustle," he recalled. "He could have been in used cars or suits; he happened to be in medicine. I don't think he was evil any more than a person who hustles Paymaster's evil." Crocker's career had also unfolded with the changing standards of informed consent and concern about radioactive materials. Looking back forty years, one feels a sadness that these experiments were the behavioral norm. It brings no credit to our field, but I don't think they were pernicious. The whole of institutional life at that time was a foul conception of human opportunity and importance. The leading in of some radioisotope experiments isn't very startling. But there were those who were not going to be denied the right to flage the past."

A personal injury lawyer David White Lief was, at thirty-nine, the youngest member of the task force and the most colorful. He was aggressive and articulate and possessed of a deep suspicion of establishment authority. He had led anti-war marches when he was in the ninth grade. His wife, Janice, worked at the school as an occupational therapist.

White Lief wanted the task force to have subpoena power and not have to beg for cooperation. He objected to the we're all in this together tone in the letter the task force sent to hospitals and universities requesting record searches.

"That's not my style," he recalled. "My style is: Here's a subpoena. You have thirty days to respond."

"The experiments illustrate what was wrong with the attitudes of the researchers," he said. "They experimented on children who were wards of the state; they gained the full cooperation of the man who was supposed to look out for their interests—a major U.S. corporation took advantage for their own self-interest. They violated their AEC license. They not only trampled common law rights, they broke federal licensing agreements."

White Lief argued insistently that the researchers should have been held to the Nuremberg Code, the standard of consent set forth during the trial of Nazi doctors who tortured people in the name of scientific experimentation. The code is a secular landmark in the modern ethical canon, but as Dybwad and Crocker pointed out, American researchers did not think it applied to them. They were not war criminals. Indeed, the code was not cited in any U.S. court until 1965. Nine years earlier, the scientific-research community adopted a set of ethical guidelines known now as the 1964 Helsinki Declaration. It underscored the essential importance of a person's consent but also the importance of allowing research on people.

"I don't think I'm guilty of retrospective judgment," White Lief told me in his office in downtown Boston. "I asked the law student who was helping me to get all the legal cases from the 1940s and 1950s. Then I started in the rooms with the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights. Something



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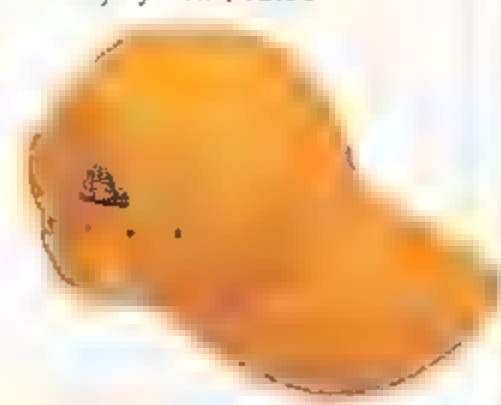
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Captain William McCoy c. 1925

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Captain William McCoy c. 1925

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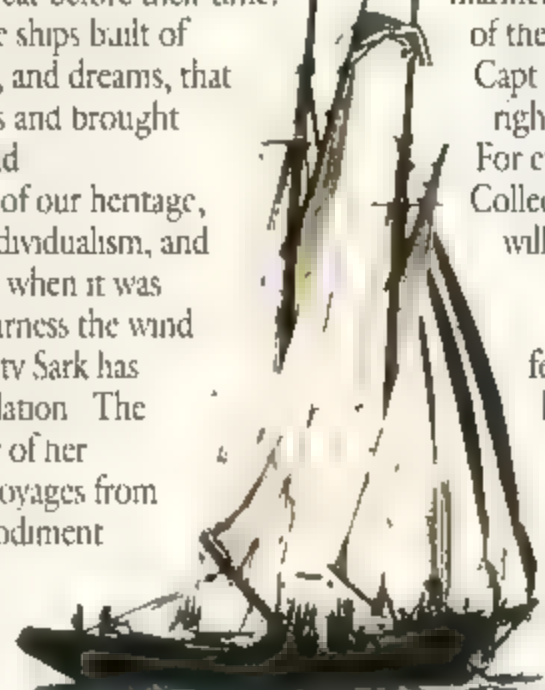
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## White-Lief argued that the researchers should have been held to the Nuremberg Code, the standard set forth during the trial of Nazi doctors.

they always tell you in law school is that ignorance of the law is no defense. Scientists should have been charged with knowledge of whatever law existed. They can't plead common practice as a basis for ignoring the common practice."

"Is it fair to single out the scientists?" I asked him.

"It's important for society to clarify that not only is it unacceptable today, it was unacceptable then. It was against the common law, and the fact that they were doing it and the state and industry were cooperating is no excuse. We are inherently more moral today. Our standards are better than they were then."

**A** AMERICANS are haunted by the myth of perfectibility. Each generation makes improvements that are an implicit criticism of the generation before it. This faith that history is progressive, that all the errors of the past can be fixed for tomorrow by practical Yankee know-how, is part of the nation's naïve genius. And certainly in some obvious and indisputable ways, we are, as David White-Lief would say, more moral, more aware, more protective of rights, more alert to injustice. But it's folly for the present to congratulate itself. Judging the past is a slippery business. It's impossible to know if what you have in your sights isn't something here at hand that you don't want to face. A telling vein of outraged innocence ran through the deliberations of the task force on human subject research, it surfaced most visibly in the question that would eventually be a chapter heading in the final report: "How Could It Have Happened?" As if in this present day, all the protections withstanding, abuse couldn't happen. As if disadvantaged members of society would never again be at the whim of the powerful. As if this generation were exempt from the dynamics that have been part of humanity from time immemorial. As if the future would never find us in violation of standards we didn't recognize were wrong.

Should the scientists at the Fernald school have known that what they were doing was wrong? Was it wrong? Is there a set of principles that one can hold in any culture anywhere, at any time in history, without being a saint or a fanatic? Absent transcendent values, are we doomed to chase after perpetually shifting standards, guided by nothing more steadfast than the ethics of expediency?

In Massachusetts in July 1992, the commissioner/prophet brought down a set of Guiding Principles to hang on the walls of all Department of Mental Retardation facilities, the Fernald school among them. The department will "promote the right of people with mental retardation to exercise choice", the department will "respect the dignity of each individual", and so forth. The rights of the weak and defenseless are asserted not because God loves them before he loves MIT scientists and talk-show hosts but because reason and compassion compel in us respect for the dignity of individuals. If the language of the Guiding Principles won't get anybody out of bed, at least the sentiments are noble. But what, in lieu of hell, can enforce such ethics? Montel Williams? *The Boston Globe*? The wrath of a task force?

**I** N MARCH Doe West presented the first draft of her report. Her effort to grasp the context of the past was reflected in its title: "The Standard of the Day." David White-Lief and the advocates were highly critical. The report was biased, emotional, unacademic. Task force member Virginia Tiset, a lawyer, threatened to quit if the draft was published as it was. "I was shaken," Doe West recalled. "The advocates thought by putting the past in context, I was disallowing ethical judgment of any kind." The moral, she concluded, was that a true understanding of the past would "require a level of objectivity that is horrendously uncomfortable to those who have been wounded by the system."

By April, the report was revised and the task force was ready to vote on its findings. People rolled their eyes and moaned whenever David White-Lief brought up the Nuremberg Code. "To the last moment, I wasn't sure there would be a majority who would find that the experiments constituted a basic violation of human rights," Fred Misilo recalled. By a 7 to 6 vote—two members were absent—the task force found that the nutrition studies had indeed constituted "a violation of the fundamental human rights of the subjects involved." The factions divided along the line that marked their differing sensibilities from the start. Misilo had tried to be something of an impartial chairman, but when it came down to a decision, he found himself wondering again, Why Fernald, why not Mt. Herman? and he cast the deciding vote.

Would Clemens Benda have agreed? Much of his work at the Fernald school was based on a thyroid disorder theory of Down's syndrome that was washed away by the discovery of a genetic anomaly in 1958. Before he died in 1974, he had apparently found Jesus. Combing his files, the task force discovered a poem Benda had written. It reads like a self-indictment. "In my conceit no longer wise / Facts, reason, science I despise, / For such things are the devil's lies. The books I swore by I have burned, / Freud, Nietzsche, Menck-en, all are spurned! / To Jesus now my soul has turned."

One well-known criticist made the comment that the children of the Fernald-school experiments may not have been harmed, but surely they had been wronged. Of course, that depends on how you define harm. As I was getting ready to leave Austin LaRocque's house, his wife said bitterly, "This was the college-degree people, the big cheeses just opening a can of worms. It should never have been opened. My husband doesn't trust anybody. He has bad dreams. He shakes. He sings out. He's going into a horrifying past that he's buried for years. All the stuff he doesn't want to face is in his dreams."

Of the seventy-four known test subjects, twenty-six have still not been tracked down by the task force, and for all anybody knows, they may never be found, and the news of long-ago wrongs and harms may never trouble their sleep. And until some future outrage cries out for another jury to be gathered, the rest of us can be pleased to think that we are better than we were—or maybe better than we are—and that none of this will ever happen again. ■



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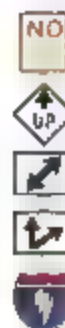
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T H E E S Q U I R E G U I D E

# LIFE ON THE NET

We hear America modeming

By PHIL PATTON



## Beavis and Borges

ONE NIGHT NOT LONG AGO, Ed Krol, the venerable guru of the Internet, alumnus of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, and author of *The Whole Internet Catalog*, was "appearing" in one of America Online's "auditoriums." There, you could talk to him, or rather type to him, and he to you, albeit with the usual

frustrating time hiccups called netlag.

Ed was carrying on, as is common these days, about bandwidth and the future of the information highway when all of a sudden, in front of a million potential audience members, a character with the on-line name PQ4 Freak popped in and asked, "Wuzzup?" Ed went on about how fiber would bring the Internet to your home by the year 2000, and PQ4 Freak typed, "HELLOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO?" and was gone. Soon someone else wandered in to say, "Hello. I'm lost" as Ed continued typing about how you need a TCP/IP connection for raw Internet. "Oh, well I'm outta here. Have fun."

Then a battery warning went off,

and Ed himself ran off to plug in his PowerBook Duo Dock. "Back in about ten seconds," he typed.

It was just another evening in America's new living room: the world on-line, where the serious and the silly crossbreed surreally. Imagine if Letterman did his show on the sidewalk and people wandered in off Broadway.

All of a sudden, it seems that every one is on-line. Rosie O'Donnell tests out punch lines under dozens of names on America Online, and Madonna "reads bedtime stories" to promote her new single on the Underground Music Archive ("You can interact with me," she begins, "but you can't touch me.") Rush Limbaugh and Billy Idol, NBC and Scientific

American are on-line. There are downy-cheeked B-1 pilots and grizzled B-36 vets, gay square dance clubs and bagpipe players. For all the high-minded, high-tech visions, a lot of the net is soft-core porn on ThrobNet, discussions of Spam and Star Trek on Prodigy, sad-sack stories in "discussion rooms," and lounge-lizard come-ons on Teen Chat on AOL's People Connection. The net is the Lubavitchers and the Russians. Reicom and GlasNet helped turn back the coup of 1991. It is a report on the National Information Infrastructure from Al Gore's office and bits of gossip about Amy Fisher.

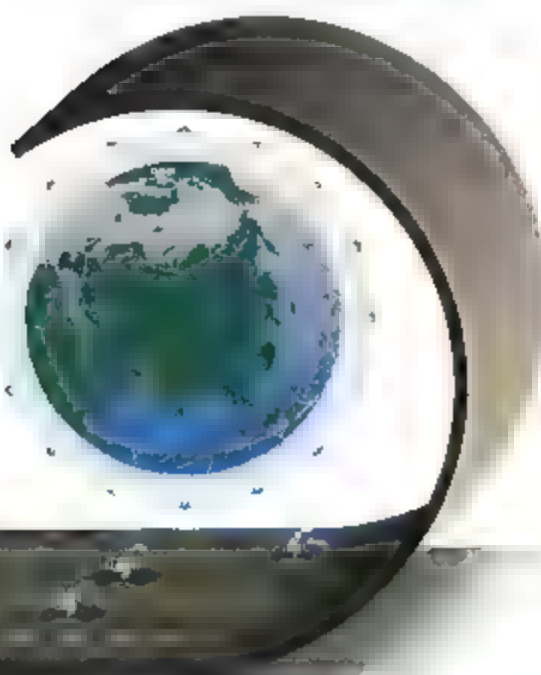
Once, the vision of cyberspace was a shimmering city in the sky. But what we've got on the screen so far is mostly words—words of SEC filings and NASA shuttle maintenance schedules, of conspiracy theories and alt sex stories. It's as if we had built the imaginary ultimate library Borges dreamed of: all the books in the world, linked together, but when we walked in, we found Bart Simpson at the checkout desk, playing Nintendo.



## I. THE NET DEFINED

**[-]** IT'S THE INTERNET of course, and the estimated ten to twenty million people around the world who use it but it's much more. It's the commercial services—1.3 million on Prodigy, 2 million on CompuServe, a million on AOL. It's GENie, Apple's eWorld and thousands of small bulletin boards and access providers.

And the Internet itself? It's a net



work of innumerable computer networks representing thousands of hot buzzing machines tended by dozing wireheads with cans of Jolt in their hands. For most of us, it is a vast thicket of services and files brought by an

Internet access provider, who sells us the on-ramp and in some cases the vehicle to ride it to chat, to download *Moby Dick* or twenty dissertations on *Moby Dick*.

But the real net is not located in hard disks or copper wires. It is a buzzing in our collective synapses—especially the synapses of dreamy, futuristic countercultural types. The net is the whole information infrastructure today and any number of dreams of what it can be tomorrow.

A decade ago, the vision of the net was introduced as "the matrix" in William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*. Gibson made jacking into this cyberspace sound like a combination of Jack Daniel's and Disneyland. "Consensual hallucination," he called it, a place where "all the data in the world stacked up like one big neon city, so you could cruise around."

The reality is a dizzying landscape of domains and servers, nodes and browsers, where infohobs scuttle through hyperlinks and trace threads, and whose ruling philosophy is complexity theory—the happy belief that this chaos will, all sort itself out somehow, someday, and meanwhile, hey, go with the flow.

## GETTING ON IT: WHAT YOU NEED

What you need is a fast computer and a fast modem. Modems come in various speeds, from 2400 baud to the generally standard 9600 to 14.4K and higher.

Don't buy anything less than 14.4 from now on. Don't worry about what the numbers mean. Big is faster and better.

You need a phone line and software. The software can be as simple as the terminal program supplied free with your Windows operating system. On-line services supply disks and free memberships—typically for a month or so—with many computers or shrink-wrap disks with computer magazines, modems, or other products. They know that giving away the razor will pay off in sales of blades.

## NOTHING BUT NET

Computers are connected directly to the Internet by something called TCP/IP, developed mostly by a man with a devilishly sharp beard named Vint Cerf. If you use a service such as the WELL or Echo, you in effect make use of the service's direct connection to the Internet. This is called a shell connection, and its indirectness limits the programs you can use to explore the net. Your bandwidth is frequently limited as well.

To get "raw net" as close as a private citizen is likely to get to a direct Internet connection—you need a SLIP or PPP connection. SLIP stands for serial line Internet protocol, PPP for point-to-point protocol. Suffice it to say that both serve as diplomats to the empire of UNIX, translators of the vernacular of your computer into the lingua franca of the net. This kind of con-

people include proverbs or quotations in their news group postings. And the names used in chat groups often mislead. You never know whether Jajapeech is a southern belle or a forty-seven-year-old male septic-tank pumper pretending to be a fourteen-year-old girl. Middle-aged fathers who drive Buick Skylarks and regularly attend Protestant churches go on-line as leather babes. Detectives pretend to be young boys to catch pedophiles on-line. It is said that the ulti-

mate squelch on-line is the question "How much do you weigh?"

For the past year, one of the worst-kept secrets on the net has been how easy it is to get the digital equivalent of a vanity license plate. Marlon@Brando.com. In most cases, an Internet service provider can set you up with one for less than \$50.

The question is, since you can be anyone you want to be on-line, why do so many people choose to be jerks?

## Say It with a Smiley

The net has brought back writing—sort of. Just when it appeared that slackers and Gen-Xers had gone wholly visual on us, the net has kicked them back into the land of the word. But since these are just words, the facial expressions, tones, and all the emotional information of face-to-face contact are rendered in crude hieroglyphs called smileys—the slang of the net. The first smiley was the colon, hy-

phen, and close parenthesis, which suggested a happy face on its side. Since then, the repertory of these "emoticons" has grown to constitute a language of its own, and the invention of new ones, a crude form of design, if not literature. Nothing better sums up the state of the net right now than these jerry-built, neck-twisting have-a-nice-day buttons, desperate efforts to inflect words and add image to language.



nection is available through such Internet service providers as PANIX, Netcom, Cerfnet, or PSI. But getting software to work happily with SLIP or PPP is not for the fainthearted.

You pay for two things: the local phone call to reach a service or access provider on the net, and a fee for the service itself. For most users, a number remarkably close to the amount of their cable TV bill. After that, computers in Singapore or Sri Lanka linked to the net are as accessible as they'd be if they were close by. That is because the network of lines and phone services that connect all of these machines is effectively paid for by government agencies, universities, companies, and access providers. Each piece of E-mail provides a sketch of how the net works in the form of the "shurttail" that shows where your mail has arrived from. Like Michael Jordan's shot in the commercial, it travels here, there, up, around, over—nothing but net.

## II. WHAT'S ON

**[-]** THE NET IS actually many nets, overlapping but only partially interlinked, from crude local bulletin boards to the "hypermedia" World Wide Web.

## BULLETIN BOARDS

The crudest unit of the net is a computer with a phone line linked to it, left

on permanently for other computers to call. There are hundreds of thousands of such "bulletin-board systems" (BBSs), containing everything from the catalogs of local public libraries to photos of German girls romping with German shepherds.

The biggest BBS is probably FedWorld, an example of your tax dollars at work. On Fed-

World, you can find such government documents as the complete text for NAFTA, or you can browse the reports of your favorite watchdog agencies—the General Accounting Office or, say, the Office of Technology Assessment. Access it independently by dialing 703-321-8020, or as a menu item through an Internet provider or on-line service.

## COMMERCIAL ON-LINE SERVICES

Cybersnobs look down on commercial services. Telling them you have an E-mail address at AOL, CompuServe, or, God forbid, Prodigy is like saying your computer is a Commodore 64. But these are the malls of cyberspace, and as David Byrne once said, you can keep up with what's going on in America by visiting a mall a week.

America Online. With the bright, upbeat air of *USA Today* or *Good Morning America*, AOL is probably the best run and certainly the fastest growing of the commercial services. It has NBC, MTV, *The New York Times*, *Time* (read it Sunday afternoon), and other periodicals on-line. It has created the best links to the Internet of any commercial service. AOL's biggest drawback is its slow pace in providing service at 9600 baud. At the more common 2400 baud, it can be teeth-grittingly slow.

CompuServe. Compares favorably with AOL, but with more emphasis on scaling things, which few people have shown an inclination to buy. And CompuServe now offers connections to Internet newsgroups.

Prodigy. Founded by IBM and Sears, it is slow and ugly, with huge spidery

## Vanity Plates for the I-Way

**@** HOW YOU sign yourself on-line is crucial. Your "sig" is your identity. The net is a place to become someone else. It begins with on-line names, abbreviated for purposes of the net. Like the street names of mafiosi or Crips, these are vital.

On some parts of the net, such as AOL, you use a name like a CB handle—"Prez" or "Bubbarox." The

address format is formulaic: a name, the "@" sign, and what's called a domain. Example: **King@Graceland.com** is pronounced "King at Graceland dot com." This last is the extension, in which "com" stands for commercial, "gov" for the government, "edu" for educational institutions, and "org" for nonprofits.

On-line sigs and mailbox names have taken on a certain affectation. Many

## Know What You're Talking About

**avatar:** An identity you assume on-line, taken from Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*.  
**bot:** Short for infobot or knowbot. Any program used to search the net for specific programs, files, or listings.  
**FAQ file:** For "frequently asked questions." A file of answers to basic questions at most net sites that should be

consulted to avoid looking dumb and being flamed by net vets.  
**finger:** The name of various programs used to find someone's identity on the net.  
**flame:** To shout (type in capitals), insult, intimidate, or otherwise hassle someone on-line; also a noun.  
**lurker:** A person who logs on to chat groups or newsgroups, reading but not sending or posting. Verb form also seen, as well as "delurk," to suddenly pop up on a group.  
**newbie:** A new user. Fre-

quently encountered in combination with "clocker."  
**site:** Any location for files and services on the net: "A way-cool Web site."  
**Spam:** From the Monty Python sketch—"Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam!" To type on-line in a repetitious way that wastes bandwidth, as in obscenely flooding a chat group with carriage returns. Not to be confused with the newsgroup alt.spam, dedicated to postings by fans of Spam recipes, Spam sculpture, Spam lore.

A number of leading BBSs with prurient themes have joined together in KinkNet, a kind of agricultural co-op that is to porn what Ore-Ida is to potatoes. That's free enterprise for you. "Welcome to KinkNet. How are you bent?"

letters and a running band of ads. Its virtues include an interactive ESPN department and services for kids.

Delphi. "Explore the Internet for free," the ads run. And Delphi's introductory deal—five free hours—is appealing. Delphi is a service as well as an

Internet shell connection. It gives you a command menu but no modern interface. Rupert Murdoch believes in it, however, and improvements are due soon. In keeping with the Murdoch style, Delphi also offers "R rated celebrity" images you can download.

World Apple's on-line service is still new, with a friendly interface based on the metaphor of a town, with post office—click on the mail truck to get your E-mail library, arts center, and so on. The style is part Peter Max, part Saul Steinberg. But short of E-mail, there is no means for access to the Internet. It's still only for the Mac, with a Windows version due next year.

## THE INTERNET ITSELF

To grasp what the Internet really means, it is more useful to look at the vehicles than the highway. On the Internet, those vehicles are a series of tools or programs that bring words and images to your screen from files and programs in distant computers—or close ones (Distance or placement on the great reticulated mystery of the net is irrelevant). The tools are operated by your typing at the dreaded command line of raw net programs, picking from menus on services such as Delphi, or clicking and pointing in the best of the new software, such as the Pipeline (see The Way to Go). These tools include:

**Hot Spot On-line**  
Internet Underground Music Archive. Right now one of the hottest spots on the net is this "virtual kiosk" on the Web, from which you can download whole songs or fifteen-second sound nibbles of them. Warner Records has just joined such inlets as Bedazzled, Quagmire, and BGC.  
<http://www.kuma.com/>

**File Transfer Protocol** A basic tool for downloading files from distant computers.  
**Gopher** A program that retrieves files. It was first developed at the University of Minnesota, and the name combines a reference to the perennially hapless Golden Gopher football teams with a pun on "go-fer." There are many gophers in different locations now, and in some services you can simultaneously search all "gopherspace."

**Terminal** A program to make your computer behave as if it were a terminal linked to a distant computer so you can use the programs and files there.



**WAIS** Wide area information server. A group of programs that work together to find information on different computers, from Mac to UNIX, according to "keywords" related to a topic.

## ACCESS PROVIDERS, OR GATEWAYS

Access providers are local services that provide you with a link to the Internet. Generally, they also offer their own selection of bulletin boards and chat groups. In the real world, access providers are cruddy offices jammed with UNIX boxes, big Suns, or DEC file servers that act as brokers between your computer and others, large and small, on the net.

Providers have flavor, like neighborhoods. They tend to reflect the qualities of the cities or regions where they are located and the subcultures that make up their membership.

1. **The WELL** Marin County Very Whole Earth Catalog the original. Did tie in to Woodstock anniversary.

2. **MindVox** Manhattan cyberpunks nostalgic for a 1960s they never knew, impatient for reality to go virtual.

3. **Echo** Manhattan downtown. More women than any other, and some female-only salons.

## THE ELECTRONIC MAILBOX

All of the pieces of the larger net share three elements that reflect the overriding need of people on line to sound off gossip, and quibble.

**E-mail** With nothing more than an AOL or CompuServe account, you can send electronic mail to any E address on the globe. Each of the on-line services has fairly straightforward mail to other members, and most can send to other services—from AOL to CompuServe, for instance. AOL's Internet gateway allows you to send mail only—not files—to net addresses.

**Mailing lists** A step above E-mail is a mailing list to which you subscribe. Sign up on the "hey-joe" list, for instance, and new postings about Jimi Hendrix pop up in your E-mail. You subscribe by sending an E-mail message to hey-joe-request@ms.uky.edu. Many mailing lists include "archives" of older material. You can reach them by ftp, as for example, ftp://ms.uky.edu, then look for pub.mailing-lists-hey-joe.

**Forums or newsgroups** Called forums on AOL and CompuServe, newsgroups on the Internet, these are virtual bulletin boards where people of shared interests post news, queries, and opinions. These can be baseball fans, Deadheads, nano-teen buffs, or investors in derivatives. You read, "post" a message, and wait for replies—or flames.

## III. BEYOND INTERNET

THE NET CAN CARRY more than words, but for most people only if they download files of image and sound—fifteen-second snatches of songs, say, or even bits of film. You can download film trailers from AOL, for instance, but it will take you as long as it would to watch the film. Seeing the trailer for *Schindler's List* running in a little box at the edge of your computer is but one example of the many bizarre experiences to come in the multimedia world of the

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## NAVIGATING THE I-WAY

net. At infotamu.edu, you can find the president's weekly Saturday radio address, around which millions do not arrange their weekend schedules. And last year, hardcore UNIX boys laborously transmitted the first film on the net: an obscure tale, *The Secret Life of Bees*. But the promise of full multimedia on the Internet lies in the World Wide Web.

### THE WORLD WIDE WEB

"Al, else is gaslight," said the late conductor Herbert von Karajan after he first heard music on a compact disc. For on-line net denizens, the World Wide Web makes the weary world of gophers or telnet seem like vinyl.

The World Wide Web is a new way of exploring the Internet based on a formidable type of organization called hypertext, in which documents are linked to others by keywords that lead to other documents, and so on—often in a dizzying drop into lists and more lists. It's a combination of Lewis Carroll and *Finnegans Wake*, or a nightmare version of the outlines your junior high school teacher made you produce.

Start with "iri" and work your way down to specific museums, then specific collections of Kandinsky or Picasso stored at sites that are physically located around the world. The Web is intended to be simpler to use than gopher or WAIS, so simple that it took only the surparticle physicists at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics to dream it up. So think of it as an information supercollider.

You can recognize a Web address by the prefix <http://> from "hypertext transfer protocol." Web sites such as the Underground Music Archive often contain hypermedia—picture, sound and even video files as well as words.

The Web can be difficult and disorienting. When NASA first sent spiders into space, the earliest webs they spun were awkward and misshapen. It took days before webs with the neat axes and tangents of earthbound arachnids began to appear. As with outer space, so with cyberspace, where the gravity of the traditional organization of words and images is absent.

To deal with the Web, you need new kinds of programs called browsers, of which the most famous is Mosaic.

## The Way to Go

**1. Most computers** these days come with pre-installed modems,

which double as faxes, but if you don't have one, choose a fast 14.4 model. Be sure it's "Hayes compatible"—90 percent are. Most laptops accept credit-card-size fax-modems such as the Megahertz XJ1144.

**2. You can use** your normal phone line for the modem, if you have call waiting, disengage it temporarily. Ask the phone company for instructions. (In many areas, \$70 will do it.)

**3. If you are starting out** on-line, try America Online. Pick up a starter kit at a computer store, or phone 800-827-6364 to have AOL send you one. The kit comes with software, a temporary on-line name, password, and ten or so hours of free time. AOL is useful in helping you

understand the whole idea of being on-line. It gives you an E-mail address and offers a partial gateway to some Internet features, notably gopher, WAIS, and newsgroups. If you buy a new Mac, use the included software and time credit to check out Apple's eWorld.

**4. One of the best** examples of what the Internet can be is the Pipeline, an access provider in New York as well as an access program licensed to providers around the country. It's the net for grown-ups: no command line, multiple windows, (almost) plain English terminology, and a touch of whimsy. It lets you point and click in Windows or Mac on all the ftp, gopher, WAIS, and other targets, and is organized by subject. You can cut and paste into

other programs. You can customize a news-group folder to keep up with your favorites and even browse the Web, Mosaic-style.

To find a local provider for Pipeline, or to have the software mailed to you, call 212-267-3636. With the software comes a list of SprintLink numbers for use anywhere in the country. Of the various subscription plans, try the \$20/20 hours offer as a starter.

**5. There are dozens** of books about the Internet, intimidating slabs of cyberspace that look as interesting as telephone books. But once you're jacked in, a phone book is what you need. Among the best is *The Internet Directory* by Eric Braun (Fawcett/Columbine, \$25). Another approach is to put the book itself on-line. *Global Network Navigator* is a guide for the Web. Call 800-998-9938 to sign up.

### MOSAIC: THE MONDO APP

Sure, it's a cool technology; venture capitalists regularly say about any new development, but where are the applications?

The key application for the Web is Mosaic, a program that follows the strands of the Web from one "site," or "page," to another. Invariably described by net vets as "totally warm and fuzzy," it has developed a legend as "the mondo application," the future of the net. Developed at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, Mosaic brings in the sounds and images of the net, if you have a powerful enough computer.

And it's free—sort of. You can download it from the NCSA, but it requires a SLIP or PPP connection to use it, and it can run painfully slow on

most personal computers. A more robust commercial version, AIR Mosaic, comes with Internet in a Box.

### INTERNET IN A BOX

It sounds like what everyone wants: the whole shebang, ready to roll. Internet in a Box (call 800-777-9638, \$149) combines software for Internet access with an 800-number phone system called RAMP that sets up your connection to the net automatically in a promised five minutes. Some two hundred local access providers support the program, and you can use it anywhere in the country—albeit at high rates of almost \$10 an hour—through SprintLink. But whether the box lives up to the promise of its name depends on how well the ambitious phone link works and how enthusiastically local providers support it.



**Through the Pipeline:** Two of the basic menus, along with a painting downloaded from the Kandinsky Image Archive

#### IV. NET CULTURE

THE INTERNET was born in 1969 with the creation of the ARPANET by the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency, which would later give us the Stealth fighter. The network linked four computer networks at UCLA, the Stanford Research Institute, the University of Utah, and the University of California at Santa Barbara to help computer researchers working around the country. The net grew until military functions split off as MILNET in 1983. And something strange happened. More than a way to ship technical files or scientific documents, the net became a means of communication. On its margins, just as beside the railroad or blacktop, a new culture began to sprout. That culture had everything to do with the fact that while the net had been built by professors, it would be run by sophomores. So Deadheads and Trekkies are disproportionately represented on newsgroup lists.

## CRIME: CAN YOU BE RAPED ON-LINE?

As on campus, jokers abound on the net, and not all of their pranks are merry. Not long ago, it was revealed that wily hackers had stored more than a thousand pornographic images on the computers at the Lawrence Livermore lab, well known for its nuclear-weapons research. The problem is not that your tax dollars are being wasted on hard-disk space for smut but that someone

trying to download the image of Katrina the Princess of 6q in all her bit-mapped glory might accidentally get detailed plans for a multiple, independently targeted warhead system.

The net has long fostered a Woodstock-like spirit, mingling respect for the common good with that for individual rights of expression. This spirit is violated only hourly, by the shrill, the psychotic, the greedy

Commercial services have their policies, too. AOL warns against such offenses as obscenity, chain letters, spamming, and general flaming. Prodigy is said to be developing "George Carlin software" to send through the files on search and destroy missions targeting seven or more words you can't type in (private, at least) cyberspace. If you do, you can "lose privilege" that is, be bounced

Other sins remain less easy to define. One AOL user charged that her ex was "stalking" her online—she didn't

dare open her mailbox for fear she'd encounter another of his missives. And the phrase "on-line rape" has popped up in discussions of future net policy, a weird mingling of the philosophies of Jaron Lanier and Catharine MacKinnon. But the biggest offense on the net, with its happy anarchy is commercialism. Laurence Canter and Martha Siegel, the two lawyers who ran an ad last year, have become as famous on the net as Bonnie and Clyde.

## THE FUTURE OF THE NET

Be warned: As soon as you take to the net, you will encounter traffic jams. The sexier the software, the slower it runs on the net, the neater the site, the harder to get on. And just as we are running out of telephone numbers, the Internet is running out of IP addresses. So get ready for more notices like this one: **FINAL FURTHER NOTICE**. Due to system and network load, the music archives at [wupedu](http://wupedu) will no longer be made available to a gopher.

Look for what Kevin Kelly, net visionary and author of *Out of Control* calls "flash crowds" herded of on liners following fashion from one hot site to the next.

Right now, programs such as Mosaic run slowly as they struggle to cram pictures and sounds through copper wire. Faster computers and modems will ease the problem, and cable will soon

bring the net through a bigger information pipeline to your home (Intel has already developed the means to do so.) But even before that happens, fervid netizens and websters will be demanding live audio, then video.

Already, bouncers are being posted in cyberspace. No one has complained, because the first users to be restricted are not human: the first barriers are being erected against software—the retrieval rodents and web worms. NO BOTS ALLOWED signs are springing up outside the most exclusive clubs on the net.

Get ready for the reaction, and the debate. Doesn't software have rights, too? If you think PC has gone too far, wait until you meet PC on your PC. ■

## Hot Spots On-line

**Black-budget Pentagon programs list; ask about "Neon Azimuth": E-mail trader@cup.martal.com**

**The Wiretape**—an odd mix of fringe-culture documents as well as the CIA world guide: go over to [wiretap.salon.com](http://wiretap.salon.com)

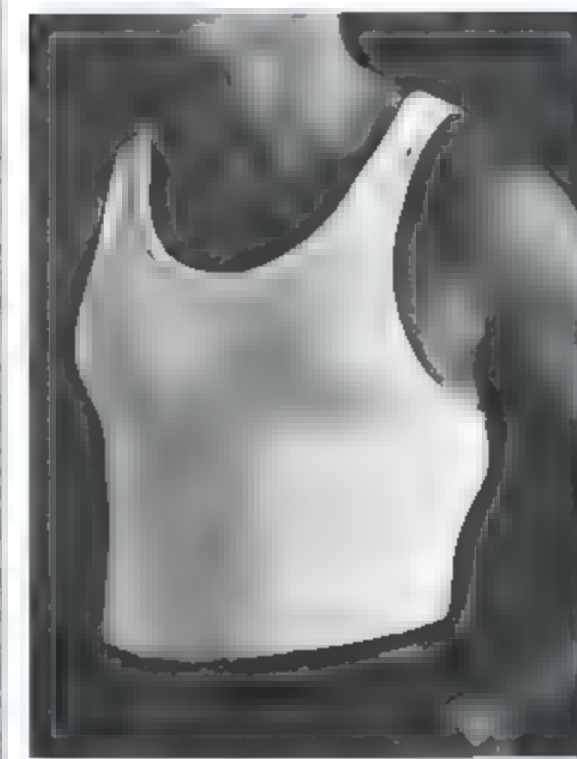
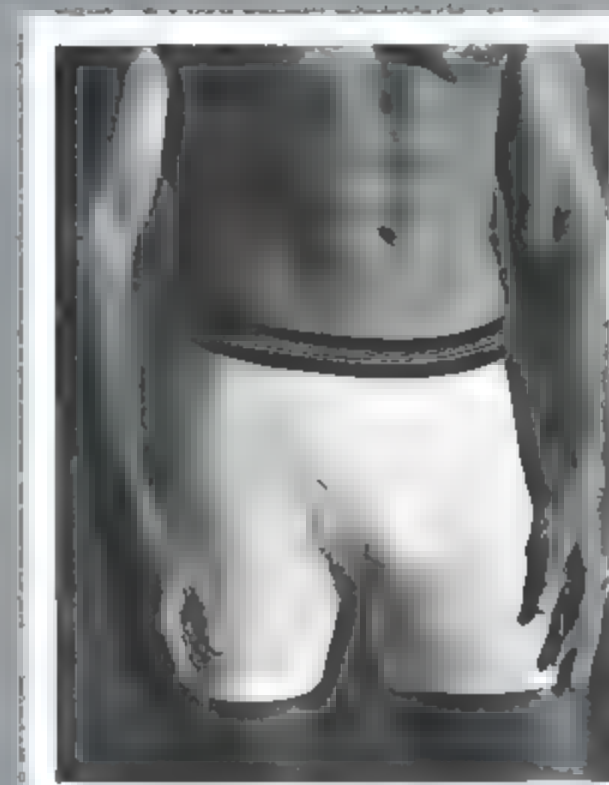
## Because You Can

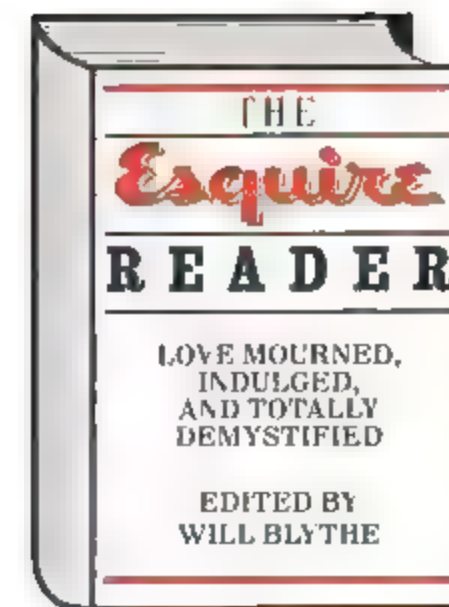
**A lot of what goes on on-line is useless, trivial, and silly. Call it the "because you can" (BYC) phenomenon.**

Dozens of coffeemakers and vending machines are linked to the net. Dial up to check

**how many cups are brewing, how many bottles left. Why? Because you can. You can order pizza from Pizza Hut on the net, at least in parts of California. Why? BYC. Like these fraternities that every so often put a**

dog through collage just to prove it can be done, people have linked up cameras aimed at prime surfing beaches. Welcome to SurfNet! Check out the latest waves from your desk, direct from Carlsbad, California: <http://saifish.poragrine.com/surf/surf.html>





This month:  
**J. M. Coetzee**  
**Adam Phillips**  
**Geoffrey Wolff**

# Dostoyevsky Underwater

BY J. M. COETZEE

**H**E SITS IN HIS SON'S ROOM with the white salt on his lap, breathing softly, trying to lose himself, trying to evoke a spirit that can surely not yet have left these surroundings.

Time passes. From the next room, through the partition, come the hushed voices of the woman and child and the sounds of a table being laid. He puts the salt aside, taps on the door. The voices cease abruptly. He enters. "I will be leaving now," he says.

"As you can see, we are about to have supper. You are welcome to join us."

The food she offers is simple: soup, and potatoes with salt and butter.

"How did my son come to lodge with you?" he asks at a certain point. Still, he is careful to call him *my son*. If he brings forth the name, he will begin to shake.

She hesitates, and he understands why. She could say: "He was a nice young man, we took to him." But this is the

obstacle, the boulder in her path. Until there is a way of circumventing the word in all its starkness, she will not speak it in front of him.

"A previous lodger recommended him," she says at last. And that is that.

She strikes him as dry, dry as a butterfly's wing. As if between her skin and her petticoat, between her skin and the black stockings she no doubt wears, there is a film of fine white ash, so that, loosened from her shoulders, her clothes would slip to the floor without any coaxing.

He would like to see her naked, this woman in the last flowering of her youth.

Not what one would call an educated woman, but will one ever hear Russian spoken more beautifully? Her tongue like a bird fluttering in her mouth: soft feathers, soft wingbeats.

In the daughter, he detects none of the mother's soft dryness. On the contrary, there is something liquid about her, something of the young doe, trusting yet nervous, stretching its neck to sniff the stranger's hand, tensed to leap away. How can this dark woman have mothered this fair child? Yet the telltale signs are all there: the fingers, small, almost unformed, the dark eyes, lustrous as those of

Grief-stricken, epileptic, and prone to visions, Fyodor Dostoyevsky returned in 1869 from Germany to St. Petersburg to investigate the mysterious death of his stepson, Pavel. That much is a matter of historical record. But the particulars of his inquiry and the state of his soul at the time form the conjecture at the heart of J. M. Coetzee's novel *The Master of Petersburg*, excerpted here and now out from Viking. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Coetzee trained as a linguist and a computer scientist. He is the author of the novels *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Life & Times of Michael K*, among others.



Byzantine saints, the fine sculpted line of the brow, even the moody air.

Strange how in a child a feature can take its perfect form while in the parent it seems a copy.

The girl raises her eyes for an instant, encounters his gaze exploring her, and turns away in confusion. An angry impulse rises in him. He wants to grip her arm and shake her. Look at me, child! he wants to say. Look at me and learn.

His knife drops to the floor. Gratefully he fumbles for it. It is as if the skin has been flayed from his face, as if, despite himself, he is continually thrusting upon the two of them a hideous bleeding mask.

The woman speaks again. "Matryona and Pavel Alexandrovich were good friends," she says, firmly and carefully. And to the child, "He gave you lessons, didn't he?"

"He taught me French and German. Mostly French."

Matryona, not the right name for her. An old woman's name, the name of a little old woman with a face like a prune.

"I would like you to have something of his," he says. "To remember him by."

Again the child raises her eyes in that baffled look, inspecting him as a dog inspects a stranger, hardly hearing what he says. What is going on? And the answer comes. She cannot imagine me as Pavel's father. She is trying to see Pavel in me and she cannot. And he thinks further. To her Pavel is not yet dead. Somewhere in her he still lives, breathing the warm, sweet breath of youth. Whereas this blackness of mine, this beardedness, this boniness, must be as repugnant as death to the reaper himself. Death, with his bony hips and his inch-long teeth and the rattle of his ankles as he walks.

He has no wish to speak about his son. To hear him spoken of, yes, yes, indeed, but not to speak. By arithmetic, this is the tenth day of Pavel being dead. With every day that passes, memories of him that may still be floating in the air like autumn leaves are being trodden into the mud or caught by the wind and borne up into the blinding heavens. Only he wants to gather and conserve those memories. Everyone else adheres to the order of death, then mourning, then forgetting. If we do not forget, they say, the world will soon be nothing but a huge library. But the very thought of Pavel being forgotten enrages him, turns him into an old bull, irritable, glaring, dangerous.

He wants to hear stories. And the child, miraculously, is about to tell one. "Pavel Alexandrovich," she glances toward her mother to confirm that she may utter the dead name—"said he was only going to be in Petersburg a little while longer, then he was going to France."

She halts. He waits impatiently for her to go on.

"Why did he want to go to France?" she asks, and now she is addressing him alone. "What is there in France?"

France? He did not want to go to France; he wanted to leave Russia," he replies. "When you are young, you are impatient with everything around you. You are impatient with your motherland because your motherland seems old and stale to you. You want new sights, new ideas. You think that in France or Germany or England you will find the future that your own country is too dull to provide you with."

The child is frowning. He says *France motherland* but she hears something else, something underneath the words, rancor.

"My son had a scattered education," he says, addressing not the child now but the mother. "I had to move him from school to school. The reason was simple. He would not get up in the mornings. Nothing would wake him. I make too much of it, perhaps. But you cannot expect to matriculate if you do not attend school."

What a strange thing to say at a time like this. Nevertheless, turning to the daughter, he plunges on. "His French was very undependable—you must have noticed that. Perhaps that is why he wanted to go to France—to improve his French."

"He used to read a lot," says the mother. "Sometimes the lamp would be burning in his room all night." Her voice remains low, even. "We didn't mind. He was always considerate. We were very fond of Pavel Alexandrovich—weren't we?" She gives the child a smile that seems to him like a caress.

Was. She has brought it out.

She frowns. "What I still don't understand..."

An awkward silence falls. He does nothing to relieve it. On the contrary, he bristles like a wolf guarding its cub. Beware, he thinks. At your own peril do you utter a word against him! I am his mother and his father, I am everything to him, and more! There is something he wants to stand up and shout as well. But what? And who is the enemy he is defying?

From the depths of his throat, where he can no longer stifle it, a sound breaks out, a groan. He covers his face with his hands, tears run over his fingers.

He hears the woman get up from the table. He waits for the child to retire, too, but she does not.

After a while he dries his eyes and blows his nose. "I am sorry," he whispers to the child, who is still sitting there, head bowed over her empty plate.

He closes the door of Pavel's room behind him. Sorry? No, the truth is, he is not sorry. Far from it. He is in a rage against everyone who is alive when his child is dead. In a rage most of all against this girl, whom for her very meekness he would like to tear limb from limb.

He lies down on the bed, his arms tight across his chest, breathing fast, trying to expel the demon that is taking him over. He knows that he resembles nothing so much as a corpse laid out and that what he calls a demon may be nothing but his own soul flailing its wings. But being alive is, at this moment, a kind of nausea. He wants to be dead. More than that, to be extinguished, annihilated.

As for life on the other side, he has no faith in it. He expects to spend eternity on a riverbank with armies of other dead souls, waiting for a barge that will never arrive. The air will be cold and dank, the black waters will lap against the bank, his clothes will rot on his back and fall about his feet, he will never see his son again.

On the cold fingers folded to his chest, he counts the days again. Ten. This is what it feels like after ten days.

Poetry might bring back his son. He has a sense of the poem that would be required, a sense of its music. But he is not a poet, more like a dog that has lost a bone, scratching here, scratching there.

He waits till the gleam of light under the door has gone out, then quietly leaves the apartment and returns to his lodgings.

**D**URING THE NIGHT a dream comes to him. He is swimming underwater. The light is blue and dim. He banks and glides easily, gracefully, his hat seems to have gone, but in his black suit he feels like a turtle, a great old turtle in its natural element. Above him there is a ripple of movement, but here at the bottom the water is still. He swims through patches of weed, slack fingers of water grass brush his fins, if that is what they are.

He knows what he is in search of. As he swims he sometimes opens his mouth and gives what he thinks of as a cry or call. With each cry or call, water enters his mouth, each syllable is replaced by a syllable of water. He grows more and more ponderous, till his breastbone is brushing the silt of the riverbed.

Pavel is lying on his back. His eyes are closed. His hair, wafted by the current, is as soft as a baby's.

From his turtle-throat he gives a last cry, which seems to him more like a bark, and plunges toward the boy. He wants to kiss the face, but when he touches his hard lips to it, he is not sure he is not biting. This is when he wakes.

**F**OLLOWING OLD HABIT, he spends the morning at the little desk in his room. When the maid comes to clean, he waves her away. But he does not write a word. It is not that he is paralyzed. His heart pumps steadily, his mind is clear. At any moment he is capable of picking up the pen and forming letters on the paper. But the writing, he fears, would be that of a madman: violence, obscenity, page after page of it, untamable. He thinks of the madness as running through the artery of his right arm down to the fingertips and the pen and so to the page. It runs in a stream, he need not dip the pen, not once. What flows onto the paper is neither blood nor ink but an acid, black, with an unpleasing green sheen when the light glances off it. On the page it does not dry. If one were to pass a finger over it, one would experience a sensation both liquid and electric. A writing that even the blind could read.

In the afternoon he returns to Svechnoi Street, to Pavel's room. He closes the inner door to the apartment and props a chair against it. Then he lays the white suit out on the bed. By daylight he can see how grimy the cuffs are. He sniffs the armpits and the smelli comes clearly, not that of a child but of another man, full grown. He inhales it again and again. How many breaths before it fades?

He takes off his own clothes and puts on the white suit. Though the jacket is loose and the trousers too long, he does not feel clownish in it.

He lies down and crosses his arms. The posture is theatrical, but wherever impulse leads he is ready to follow. At the same time he has no faith in impulse at all.

He has a vision of Petersburg stretched out vast and low under the pitiless stars. Written in a scroll across the heavens is a rod in Hebrew characters. He cannot read the word but knows it is a condemnation, a curse.

A gate has closed behind his son, a gate bound sevenfold with bands of iron. To open that gate is the labor laid upon him. Thoughts, feelings, visions. Does he trust them? They come from his deepest heart, but there is no more reason to trust the heart than to trust reason.

From somewhere to somewhere I am in retreat, he

thinks, when the retreat is completed, what will be left of me?

He thinks of himself as going back into the egg, or at least into something smooth and cool and gray. Perhaps it is not just an egg. Perhaps it is the soul, perhaps that is how the soul looks.

There is a rustling under the bed. A mouse going about its business? He does not care. He turns over, draws the white jacket over his face, inhales.

Since the news came of his son's death, something has been ebbing out of him that he thinks of as firmness. I am the one who is dead, he thinks, or rather, I died but my death failed to arrive. His sense of his own body is that it is strong, sturdy, that it will not yield of its own accord. His chest is like a barrel with sound staves. His heart will go on beating for a long time. Nevertheless, he has been tugged out of human time. The stream that carries him still moves forward, still has direction, even purpose, but that purpose is no longer life. He is being carried by dead water, a dead stream.

He falls asleep. When he wakes it is dark and the whole world is silent. He strikes a match, trying to gather his fuddled wits. Past midnight. Where has he been?

He crawls under the covers, sleeps intermittently. In the morning, on his way to the washroom, smelly, disheveled, he runs into Anna Sergeyevna. With her hair under a kerchief, in big boots, she looks like any marketwoman. She regards him with surprise. "I fell asleep, I was very tired," he explains. But it is not that. It is the white suit, which he is still wearing.

"If you don't mind, I will stay here in Pavel's room till I leave," he goes on. "It will only be for a few days."

"We can't discuss it now, I'm in a hurry," she replies. Clearly, she does not like the idea. Nor does she give her consent. But he has paid, there is nothing she can do about it.

All morning he sits at the table in his son's room, his head in his hands. He cannot pretend he is writing. His mind is running to the moment of Pavel's death. What he cannot bear is the thought that, for the last fraction of the last instant of his fall, Pavel knew that nothing could save him, that he was dead. He wants to believe Pavel was protected from that certainty, more terrible than annihilation itself, by the hurry and confusion of the fall, by the mind's way of etherizing itself against whatever is too enormous to be borne. With all his heart he wants to believe this. At the same time he knows that he wants to believe in order to etherize himself against the knowledge that Pavel, falling, knew everything.

At moments like this, he cannot distinguish Pavel from himself. They are the same person, and that person is no more or less than a thought, Pavel thinking it in him, he thinking it in Pavel. The thought keeps Pavel alive, suspended in his fall.

It is from knowing that he is dead that he wants to protect his son. As long as I live, he thinks, let me be the one who knows! By whatever act of will it takes, let me be the thinking animal plunging through the air.

Sitting at the table, his eyes closed, his fists clenched, he wards the knowledge of death away from Pavel. He thinks of himself as the Triton on the Piazza Barberini in Rome, holding to his lips a conch from which jets a constant crystal fountain. All day and all night he breathes life into the water. The tendons of his neck, caught in bronze, are taut with effort. ■

# The Lover as Paranoiac

BY ADAM PHILLIPS

Some people would never have fallen in love if they had never heard of love  
LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

IF SEX IS THE WAY OUT of the family, falling in love is the route back, the one-way ticket that is always a return. From a psychoanalytic point of view, these miracles of affinity are echoes of our first fascinations. Such states of absorption are memory in its most immediate form, the sense of uniqueness the uncanny sign of the past. What is being recruited, or rather, evoked—what makes these transforming experiences possible—is the knowledge and desire of childhood. When we fall in love we are remembering how to fall in love. And by retrieving these earlier versions of ourselves, we achieve a kind of visionary competence.

But if falling in love is always a reminder, for Freud, it is a reminder of an impossibility. "Childhood love is boundless," he writes, "it demands exclusive possession, it is not content with less than all. But it has a second characteristic: it has, in point of fact, no aim and is incapable of obtaining complete satisfaction, and principally for that reason it is doomed to end in disappointment." We are now be-witched and terrorized—by this story of insatiability, of infinite lack, it is our modern sublime, paradoxically appropriated in Jacques Lacan's remark that love is giving something you haven't got to someone who doesn't exist. The analyst, Lacan also says, in his well-known formulation, is the one who is supposed to know, not, as he might have said, the one who is supposed to love. It is assumed that knowing is prior to or inclusive of loving.

"Transference," "repression," "fetishism," "narcissism," "the riddle of femininity"—all these key psychoanalytic concepts confirm the sense that in psychoanalysis love is a problem of knowledge, that lovers are like detectives. They are trying to find something out that will make all the difference. And the stories that psychoanalysis tells about love tend to confirm a traditional progress narrative about the acquisition of wisdom (wisdom, of course, is always countererotic). Lovers begin as prolifically inventive, producing enthralling illusions about each other (recycled from the past), only to be disappointed into truth. The madness of love is a journey

from anti- (or dis-) foundationalism on to the rocks of conviction, so to speak. Psychoanalysis, in other words, endorses the view that falling in love is not a good way of getting to know someone. It offers us instead the romance of disillusionment in which falling in love is the sometimes necessary prelude to a better but diminished better because diminished—thing, a more realistic appreciation of oneself and the other person (to which the rejoinder of the aesthete can be: If this is "real," then let's make something else). In this sobering story, the fluency of "idealization"—usually a pejorative, and always a cover story in psychoanalysis—is replaced by the haltings of ambivalence. After all the excitement, there are the revelations of dismay. Frustration is the aura of the real. But it may be that in this twilight home of disappointment, which psychoanalysis promotes, people are not suffering from their knowledge, but from losing a more ruthless capacity for self and/or other reinvention. It is not truth that they have gained but their versionarity that they have lost.

Freud and Proust are alert in complementary ways to the senses in which knowing people can be countererotic: that the unconscious intention of certain forms of familiarity is to kill desire. It is not simply that elusiveness, or jealousy sustains desire, but that certain ways of knowing people diminish their interest for us, and that this may be their abiding wish. So we have to watch out for the ways people invite us—or allow us—to know them, and also alert ourselves to the possibility that knowing may be too tendentious, too canny, a model for loving.

Lovers, of course, are notoriously frank epistemologists, second only to paranoiacs (and analysts) as readers of signs and wonders. But what would falling in love look like if knowledge of oneself or another of oneself as another, was not the aim or the result? What would we be doing together if we were not getting to know each other?

It seems as though the loved is that which it is impossible for us not to be interested in. But our languages of love are versions of theology and epistemology and thus relentlessly redemptive and enlightening. "How do I know if I know someone?" is a very different question from "How do I know if I love or desire someone?" Some people would never have known if they had never heard of knowing.

The last few years have been rough ones for psychoanalysis, which has taken a beating for everything from superfluity (given Prozac) to hysteria (recovered-memory syndrome) to a randy, deceitful founder (Freud). But just in time comes the forty-year-old British therapist Adam Phillips, whose artful, idiosyncratic essays and aphorisms ("the enviable life has now replaced the good life") do much to rehabilitate the enterprise. His new book of essays, *On Flirtation*, from which "The Lover as Paranoiac" has been abridged, is due this month from Harvard, which also issued *On Kissing, Tickling, and Being Bored*.



# The Age of Consent

BY GEOFFREY WOLFF

THEY SAT OUTSIDE the tent watching the lights, smoking dope, and Ted was glad the snow they'd felt in the air that afternoon never came. It would have been a horror show up there in a blizzard. After a while, he explained that what they were seeing was the aurora borealis.

"It's an impressive show," she said.

Ted wasn't experienced at dope smoking, and he coughed if he tried to inhale. When Maisie asked if she was a bad influence on him, he said she wasn't, and he meant it. He said he didn't respond to peer pressure, and that was such a load that he knew Maisie would laugh at him. But she didn't. Shivering now they went inside the tent.

Ted and Maisie talked about sex, and she was shocked by how much he knew. But when they reached a certain point in their conversation, "Heien thinks you're cute," she said. Ted wanted to change the subject.

He could see the northern lights flashing through the thin membrane of the tent. "Look," he said. "Isn't that amazing?"

But Maisie didn't look at the wall of the tent. She looked at her brother, who figured she'd lost interest in the aurora borealis. She talked about sex again. Whenever Ted said he didn't want to talk about sex, Maisie asked what was wrong with him, was he queering up on her? Not that Ted hadn't gone along for the ride when she'd gotten her hands on dirty movies and a movie projector a couple of months ago. They'd told their parents they were going to the town rink to skate and maybe get a hockey game together, and then Maisie and Ted and Army and Ben and Sam and the rest of their gang humped all this gear, including a "portable" generator that weighed about a ton into the woods. They hauled the generator and projector up to their tree house with ropes. Maisie was in charge of the "film festival" and got everything hooked up, although it was so damned cold she could hardly thread the film on the reel. The gang watched *Tillie Goes to the Dentist* for a Drilling and a Filing, an unbelievable story about a guy in a dentist's waiting room, reading a dirty magazine and wearing a mask who got lucky with the dentist's receptionist and then with another patient; this must have been

Tillie—who walked in on them. It was a silent movie which was fortunate because the generator snarled like a chain saw. The other movies whose titles Ted couldn't remember, were pretty much the same as *Tillie*. Events happened fast and it was hard not to laugh. Maisie did most of the talking while her associates watched. Most of what she said sounded technical to Ted and he couldn't say why, maybe it was his sister's know-how, her easy way with the jargon—he never felt right about it that she'd put that plan together.

"We went to a lot of trouble," he said, "to see those crummy movies."

"Wasn't it worth it?"

"What I don't understand," he said, "is why you didn't arrange a simpler night. Why didn't we just pop an X-rated tape in our VCR when Mom and Dad were out to dinner?"

"You got any X-rated videos?"

"I guess not."

"Besides, it was an adventure, wasn't it? Didn't it make you hot, seeing those chicks get it from that masked guy?"

"Not really."

"Why not? Because they were dogs?"

"No. Because it was unbelievable. It wasn't happening."

"Of course it wasn't happening. It was a movie, Ted!"

"I mean, it was like they weren't people. They were just pretending to be, like those animals at the circus they dress up in skirts and tuxedos. It just didn't turn me on."

"Good, Ted. Good for you," Maisie said, her voice diving deep into the grown-up register. "You're okay, kiddo."

Then they heard unearthly noises—animal sounds, something eating, something being eaten. "What's that?" Ted said, his voice catching.

"It sounds like an owl to me," Maisie said. "No question."

"What's it killing?"

"Nothing. Why do you think it's killing something?"

"Something's crying," he said. The low whimper grew louder, more urgent.

Then it was really cold, and Ted heard what he knew was a bear outside. If it wasn't a bear, it was a human being, and up there, that night, he would have chosen the bear. He

Having survived open-heart surgery, mountaineering ordeals in the Alps, and a rather tempestuous relationship with a con man of a father, Geoffrey Wolff could hardly have been laid low by a mere novel, even one that touches on as difficult a subject as incest. *The Age of Consent*, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf in February, initially gave him "a narrow road to walk. I knew a tonal botch would be disastrous. But eventually it turned out that writing about incest was a lot less overwhelming than I thought it would be. I let the characters' goodwill toward each other guide me."



started to crawl into his sleeping bag. He looked over at his sister, hugging her knees, rocking back and forth. He thought she was crying. "Maisie? You okay?"

She nodded, but she looked sad. Ted figured her sadness was for the animal crying above the owl's screech. He pictured his sister as that poor animal, caught, in pain.

She was watching Ted snuggle into his mummy bag; he was zipping it from inside, where his hands were. He was in there all the way to his eyes. Now it was silent outside except for boughs sighing above them.

"Take your hand off it," Maisie said.

"What do you mean?" Ted said.

She laughed. "You're hanging on to your dick."

"I am not!" Ted said.

"How often do you beat off?" she said.

"Lay off, Maisie."

"What? You're telling me you never beat off?"

"That's not funny." He drew his hands out of the bag into the cold, maybe to prove what a good boy he was.

"Well," she said, "Do you or don't you?"

"Not that it's any of your business, but maybe I don't need to."

"The only guy who says he doesn't," Maisie said, "is a liar if he does and an asshole if he doesn't."

"I don't care what you think," Ted snapped. He didn't want to talk about it anymore. "Where did they go?" he said softly. "You think they're gone?"

Maisie shrugged.

"It could've had us for dinner. It must not be interested in us. You scared?" he said.

Maisie lit a joint. Ted told her not to smoke inside the tent; it might catch on fire. Maisie said the tent was fire retardant like little kids' pajamas. Ted didn't laugh.

"You want some dope?" she said.

Just then a sapling cracked, loud, right outside. They'd hoisted their dirty plates and utensils and cans high up a tree, but Ted wondered if a bear had smelled the garbage. Something was out there. "We've got to do something," he said, "to scare it off." And then he began to shriek—loud, piercing shrieks like the sounds in a zoo's monkey house, hysterical and shrill and crazy. And right away his shrieks were answered by all kinds of animal calls, rabbits and birds. The camp outside the tent stopped, but Ted kept shrieking.

"Shush," Maisie said.

And he did. "I'm scared," he said.

Then Maisie started up about sex again, which pissed him off. He told her that he was losing respect for her. That shut her up, and Ted thought she was crying, and he said things to comfort her. She was sitting cross-legged, with her sleeping bag wrapped around her shoulders like a cape. She said she was freezing to death in her sleeping bag because it was summer weight, and Ted was in the goose-down bag. "I'm cold," Maisie said. "Can I come over there?"

"I guess," he said.

And she went to him and unzipped his sleeping bag and crawled in with him. For comfort, she said. To make room for her, Ted had to put his arms around her, and she had to put her arms around him. Ted let her figure out how they could fit together. He let her zip up the bag.

He let her do everything they did. He wasn't sorry, either.

The kerosene lantern lit her dull orange with flashes of blue and pink. Her face was alert. The kerosene lamp smoked, its heavy fumes trapped in the tent, but he smelled only the perfume that mingled with the familiar soapy scent of her hair, baby shampoo. Her long sweet hair fell across his face, and he inhaled her smell. He felt he'd suffocate if he didn't shift his face, but he lay there still, letting it all wash over him.

It was not yet too late to pretend they didn't recognize what was happening. It wasn't too late to crack a joke or begin a ghost story, as though they'd huddled for warmth from fear, like lost animals. Then Maisie took his hand and held it, and then she moved his hand, and now it was too late to pretend they didn't grasp what was happening.

"Maisie," he whispered into her hair.

"Shush," she said.

"Maisie," he said.

"Do you want to stop?" she said.

He shook his head, burying his face in her long hair and his lips brushed her neck, her ears, her throat. She wore a flannel nightgown, and it smelled of soap, of cigarette smoke, of perfume. He breathed in, he smelled her. Her breasts pushed against his chest. She unbuttoned his shirt, and her breasts felt soft against him. His hand moved against her, and he was astonished how soft that was, how soft her hair. He had never understood her as soft, and now she was soft wherever he touched, and she pulled her face from his face and stared at him, with her eyes wide open. He looked away.

"Look at me," she said.

He looked at her. They stared at each other, lying perfectly still. He was afraid to move. His hand moved, she closed her eyes, he closed his eyes.

"Easy," she said. "Yes," she said. "Good. That's nice."

Now her hand moved to him. He bit his lip, would not make a noise. They heard noises near the tent, something moving out there. They paid no mind. He let her do everything. She kissed him. He opened his mouth when she opened her mouth. He tasted her; she sucked his tongue. He wanted this never to stop. His hands touched her soft back, moved down her back. She was whispering in his ear, but he couldn't make out her words. Please please please please pretty please.

It was done. They rested in each other's arms.

"Sleep," she said.

He made himself be still, then he moved his hand back between her soft wet legs. She shut her legs together, gently.

"Sleep," she said.

He pretended to sleep. His head was pounding. He was hard against her soft leg, her legs locked, and he was not ashamed. His life had changed now, and shame had no part in it. He wanted to stay here. He had said nothing since he said her name. He said her name now.

She moved. She was unzipping the bag. He was still. She was on her hands and knees. He wanted her to come back. She leaned over, kissed him on his cheek the way his mother would when she tucked him in. She gently zipped up his bag. He wanted to look at her, but he was afraid if he opened his eyes she'd be gone. ■

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**On Fashion:** Woody Hochswender

## Executive Timber

**A** DEFINING feature of nineties men's style has been the mixing of workingmen's clothes with the standard elements of the business wardrobe. Men nowadays think nothing of wearing lug-sole shoes with gray flannel to the office, not to mention leather vests, thickish belts, denim shirts (with or with-

out neckties), jeans, even overalls. It depends on the office of course. But it is not at all unusual to see guys pecking away at their computer terminals while dressed as if to bale hay.

So it makes sense that companies like Timberland and Nautica, whose rugged, outdoor styles helped shape the office-casual phenomenon, are adding more tailored clothing to their repertoires. The idea being, if they're going to wear the clothes to dress down the office uniform, why not give them the whole look?

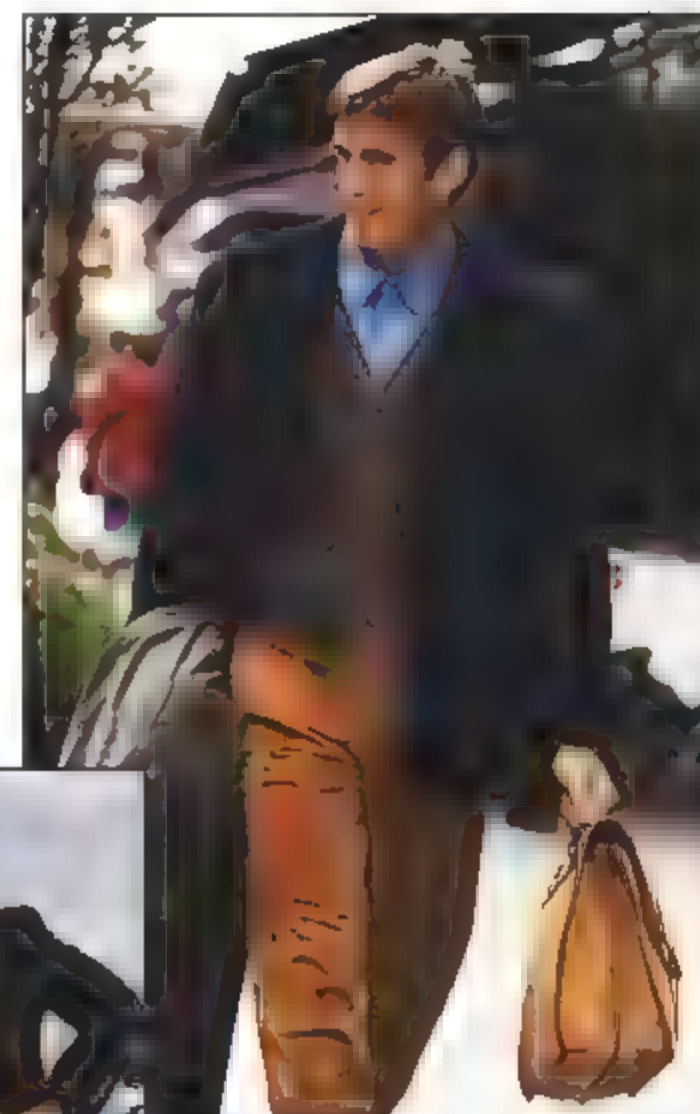
This season, Timberland debuted its first collection of more tailored clothing for both men and women, consisting of about seventy-five pieces that could go smoothly to the office on Friday and then away for the weekend: navy and charcoal wool blazers,



pleated tweed trousers, woven shirts, leather coats, leather wing-tip shoes.

"We're tapping into the dress-down Friday trend," says a Timberland spokesman. "The outdoor look is hot right now, and everyone is on the bandwagon. But we built the bandwagon."

Timberland's products have indeed proved to be something of a marvel in the



**Office outdoors:** Dressier clothes from Timberland, above, and Nautica (left) combine career and outdoor looks.

fashion world, especially the waterproof lace-up boots. For a while there, models seemed to wear nothing else on their feet. A recent Victoria's Secret catalog featured a woman in underwear and a pair of signature yellow Tims. Shoe genius Manolo Blahnik designed a high heel Timberland-type boot, and Karl Lagerfeld even made a version for Chanel (\$545, men: beaucoup).

Timberland's new tailored clothes are reasonably priced—a blazer costs \$295, tweed trousers, \$98. These are for guys who are not fussy and precious about what they wear: who perhaps carry a Timberland fisherman's bag instead of a briefcase.

Nautica, another company known for its sporty functional apparel, its big, colorful down parkas are an enormous hit among inner-city youth. It has also developed a line of more career-oriented clothing. Silk sport jackets and misty blue blazers have been added to the company's usual, graphic, nautical-inspired sportswear. But its designer and owner, David Chu, wants to go a bit beyond a simple crossover between career clothes and

outdoor looks. He has introduced several suits in his new Nautica collection, including seersucker in both superfine wool and cotton, classic gray and navy pinstripe wools, and khaki cotton. There are also band collar shirts in fine cottons and indigo-dyed denim shirts that resemble denim.

The suits run from \$335 to \$545. There is something inherently dressier about the yachting scene, so these clothes are not terribly rustic. They are looks to take you from the power lunch to the power launch. **E**

# Black-Tie Affair

The ultimate expression of male elegance, the black-tie ensemble is a uniform in the best sense: dashing, romantic, and in today's softer fabrics quite moving.

by David Byrne and Michael Ochs



Single-breasted tuxedo, tuxedo, cotton shirt, silk bow tie, studs, cummerbund by Donna Karan. Dress by Albert Elbaz. Opposite: Double-breasted tuxedo, cotton shirt, silk bow tie, and cufflinks by Ralph Lauren. Leather shoes by Johnston & Murphy. Hair dress by Donna Karan. Bracelet by Erickson Beamon. Shoes by Jimmy Choo.



[illegible]



# Country Weekend

An escape from town may suggest a casual approach, but sometimes the setting calls for more than sneakers and jeans. On Cumberland Island, Georgia, a smart informality prevails.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD EBERLE



Coat by Carriage; jacket by  
Paul by Ralph Lauren; wool  
shirt by Rick Warren; trousers  
by Paul Stuart; riding boots by  
DeKaufman & Sons. Opposite  
page: Suede jacket by Brooks  
Brothers; cashmere pullover by  
Sulka; off-duty shirt by Gucci  
windproof wool pants by  
Nigel; hat by David; Suede  
jacket by Alberto Bianchi; pants  
by Brooks Brothers; pullover by  
David; trousers by Brooks  
Brothers; hat by David; Suede  
jacket by Sulka; cashmere  
pullover by Brooks Brothers; hat  
by David.



Two-button wool tweed jacket  
and conch shirt by Paul  
Stuart; cashmere V-neck by  
Malin; cotton twill trousers and  
pool tie by Polo by Ralph Lauren;  
leather boots by Dolce & Gabbana.  
Opposite, from left: Her suede  
jacket by Agnès b.; cotton-and-  
Lycra pants by Joseph; suede  
boots by Stephane Kérian.  
Cashmere sport jacket by Brooks  
Brothers; cashmere turtleneck  
by Malin; jeans by Levi's; Wool  
jacket by Brooks Brothers;  
cashmere-blend turtleneck by  
Salvatore Ferragamo; Camel-  
hair jacket by Paul Stuart; wool  
turtleneck by CK Calvin Klein;  
jeans by Guess Men; loafers by  
J. M. Weston. Photographed at  
the Greyfield Inn.



100% wool and cashmere  
 cardigan by Salvatore Ferragamo  
 corduroy shirt by Paul Stuart  
 wide-wale corduroy pants and  
 bow tie by Polo by Ralph Lauren  
 leather boots by J. M. Weston  
 Opposite, from left: Cashmere  
 cardigan by Madewell; turtle-  
 neck by Paul Stuart; corduroy  
 trousers by Sulkas; horse vest by  
 Marc Jacobs; riding pants  
 by Hermès; camel-hair cardigan  
 with shawl collar by Barle; wool  
 turtleneck and corduroy trousers  
 by Paul Stuart; Cashmere  
 cardigan and wool turtleneck by  
 Paul Stuart; cotton twill pants  
 by Polo by Ralph Lauren. All  
 leather riding boots by Maudslayi  
 H. Kauffman & Son

For more information  
 page 177



**Perpetual cook:** The Rolex Daytona Cosmograph, introduced in the mid-1960s for \$375, features a stainless-steel case, a manual-wind movement, a chronograph, and a tachometer bezel. The one on the left, from 1969, has what's become known as the Paul Newman dial (the actor wore a Daytona in his car-racing film *Winning*), a feature that doubles the secondhand price to approximately \$12,000. The new one, on the right, retails for \$3,900. (Rolexes courtesy of Tourneau.)



**Deco redux:** The vintage Baume & Mercier mechanical watch on the left is a typical 1940s art-deco design, with a stainless-steel case and a gold-toned dial. The new Baume & Mercier, on the right, is the Hampton, introduced in 1994, in the same art-deco style. It has a curved stainless-steel case, a champagne-colored dial, and a quartz movement. It retails for \$790 new.



# Time and Again

What's old is new in watch design, as classic wristwatches with mechanical movements are being revived. Here, stylish timepieces, then and now.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID HAMSLEY

**Wake-up call:** The late-'50s watch on the left, the Jaeger-LeCoultre Memovox, was the first automatic wristwatch with an alarm; it was introduced in 1956 for \$600. Today, this model brings as much as \$7,000 at auction. On the right is Jaeger-LeCoultre's new Master Reveil, designed in the same '50s style and featuring a new alarm that chimes. Finished and assembled by hand, it retails for \$9,050.



**Fifties futurism:** The Hamilton Ventura was introduced in 1957, in fourteen-karat gold, for \$175. The world's first electric watch, it operated by battery but with a mechanical movement. The old one on the left (courtesy of Tourneau) retails now for \$1,450. The reproduction, right, gold-plated and with a quartz movement, was introduced in 1989 and retails for \$450 new.





**Simple elegance:** Introduced in 1932 for \$185, the Calatrava has been a perennial best-seller in the Patek Philippe line. The company still makes only about two hundred of this classic mechanical model a year. Today, the 1941 Calatrava, left, could bring up to \$7,000 at auction. The new one, right, retails for \$7,950.

**Retro chic:** The Movado Calendomatic, left, circa 1950, features several calendar functions. Depending on their rarity, vintage Calendomatics sell for \$5,000 to \$10,000 at auction. The new Movado, right, part of a commemorative collection introduced in 1991, is a near-exact replica. This one, in stainless steel and gold, retails for \$1,990.



**Navigational aid:** Breitling has been making the Navitimer, a pilot's watch, for forty years. It has a stainless-steel case and features a calendar, a chronograph, a tachometer bezel to measure speed, and a slide-rule function. The new one, left, retails for \$2,350. The price of the late-'70s model, right (courtesy of Tourneau), is \$1,475.

**F**OR A WHILE, it looked as if quartz watches would render mechanical ones all but obsolete; but classic wristwatches, either the kind you wind manually or the self-winding kind, are in vogue again. Why this new preference for old-fashioned technology? Though quartz timepieces are more accurate and virtually maintenance-free, mechanical watches, particularly from top Swiss houses, are of higher quality. Hand finishing reduces friction between parts, extending the life of the watch indefinitely. More than watches, these are heirlooms. Which brings us to their potential value down the road. The secondhand-watch market began to heat up around 1980, when rumors spread that the Swiss, facing stiff competition from Japan, were going to stop making mechanical watches. This was false, but the market took off anyway. It's possible to buy a vintage watch for about one-fourth to one-third the price of a new one. If you buy it through a second-hand retailer rather than at auction, you may pay more, but a quality retailer will have serviced the piece and may offer a limited warranty. In the collector's market, rare or coveted pieces command as much as several hundred thousand dollars. "The year is almost irrelevant," says Daryn Schnipper, senior vice-president of watches and clocks at Sotheby's. "The value is based on the maker, type of watch, condition, and rarity." Most experts advise against buying a watch as an investment. "You should buy what you like," says Anthony D'Ambrosio, executive director of Tourneau. "This is wearable art, a statement of who you are." —CAMILLA COZZONI

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## The Esquire Gift Guide



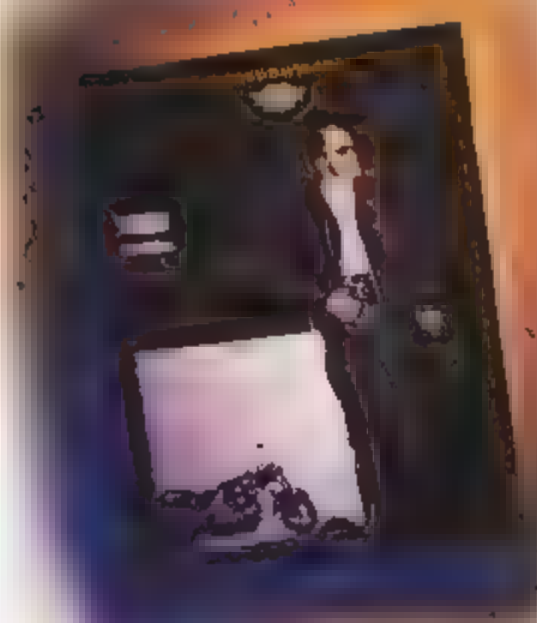
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## CARS

Phil Patton

# Virtually Yours

**T**HE LINCOLN CONTINENTAL was America's first "personal luxury" car and the first person to whom it was personal was Edsel Ford. Rebellious against his father—old Henry championed the impersonal, one-for-all car—Edsel ordered up the Continental as a special, European-accented refinement of the great Lincoln-Zephyr to drive on his sojourns in Palm Beach and Hobe Sound, wintering spots where none of us would ever think of appearing with out a personal vehicle. The car was such a hit during that 1930 social season that he put it into production as a 1940 model.

Ever since, the Continental has traced the sometimes erratic evolution of the personal-car concept. By the 1970s, the personal car often involved designer names; you could buy a Bill Blass or an Emilio Pucci Continental. The Continental came to represent the sort of experience that makes you wary in restaurants boasting "Continental" cuisine.

With the new Continental, due out the day after Christmas (the date is a Ford superstition harking back to the introduction of the Taurus), Lincoln provides a radically new definition of the personal luxury car: "You can personalize a car with fabrics or chrome," says Frederick Simon, program manager for the car. "We did it with electronics." The new Continental carries personalization beyond the cosmetic; it can become virtually any kind of car you want.

This, the first virtual automobile, offers the usual luxury-car amenities: the powerful new V-8 engine, part of Ford's new family of modular "Romeo" engines; a 4.6-liter model that the engineers boast is one of the most fuel-efficient eight-cylinders in the world. But the real innovation is in its "multiplexed" electrical system with as many channels as a good stereo and as many bits as a good computer.

Like the "fly-by-wire" control system of an F-16, the Continental's controls allow you to adjust the fast-reacting shocks for three levels of ride and three of handling. The so-called Memory Profile System records the driver's choice of twelve features, including instrument-panel brightness and mirror positions. Even the choice of preset channels on the radio tuner is programmable for each driver. (It's also a handy feature for reconfiguring the car after it's been in the hands of an overzealous valet parker.)

Carmakers like to brag about their microprocessors as well as their horsepower, and the Continental uses eleven electronic

modules to monitor its systems. This approach is not without dangers. Misused, it could become virtual chrome as ditzing as VCR programming. But Lincoln uses electronics for a reason: to give the car a personality—yours.

The essence of the virtual car is summed up by the staid but practical "virtual image display," where the sharpened needles and white numbers of the dash instruments seem to hover in three dimensions, offering more readable and usable information. It's a far cry from the more but-ton-and-good-buttons technology Detroit used to love.

"We did an off-site on this car," Simon says. This is Detroit direct for intense and sequestered meetings at which Lincoln's planners pondered high concepts—represented by diamond-shaped diagrams like the inspirational formulas of a self-help group, marked with words embodying virtues they sought in the finished product: "spirit," "smoothness," "technology," "craft." From this process emerged the unshocking conclusion that luxury, like Mies van der Rohe's God, resides in the details—often very practical and mundane details. Lincoln engineers even presented subjects with "a library of sounds" from which they chose the ideal sound of a closing door or an idling engine.

With its more aggressive front and sides tucked in like the belly of a soldier at attention, the new Continental appears a sibling of the Mark VIII coupe, but without the flamboyance, and a clear heir to the old Continental. The shape is evolutionarily flowing, with burnished corners of prismatic parking lights and a taillight band extending across the deck—a feature that Lincoln's surveys showed was read as a styling cue for a luxury car.

The purpose of all this research, of course, was to produce a sublime driving experience. In its tests, Lincoln discovered that many drivers found one competitor's engine too quiet and impersonal, another's too raspy. The V-8 they finally designed has an athletic sound, powerful but controlled. It's not banal about expressing its bit of bestiality when you floor it on a hill. And once into the curves of back roads, the "hard" steering option keeps the sensed weight of the car under firm control, marred only by an inch or two of old-fashioned American steering wheel play. On the interstates, the "push" ride setting offers a recherche vision of 1950s cruisers. Before long, your favorite midget becomes the little digital compass mounted in the rearview mirror. **E**

### 1995 Lincoln Continental Technical Features

**Engine:** 4.6-liter, 32-valve, variable-overhead-cam V-8, 260-horsepower

**Acceleration:** 0 to 60 in 8.7 seconds

**Fuel economy:** 20 mpg city, 28 highway

**Other features:** Automatic load-leveling air suspension, ABS, three-spoke air filter system, optional traction control, optional cell phone with noise-reduction microphone

**Estimated price:** \$40,000



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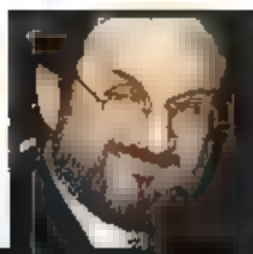
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## BOOKS

Will Blythe

# Salman Rushdie Goes Home

ONCE UPON A TIME in the halcyon days before he caught the attention of an ayatollah, before he went into hiding, before he became, simultaneously, a living martyr of secularist values and a blasphemous devil, before, in fact, he turned into a punch line (What's got long blond hair, big tits, and lives in an igloo in Iceland?), Salman Rushdie made his living as a mere writer, famous only in the relatively anonymous way that even the most successful writers are famous. He wrote bawdy, outsize, polyglot novels, comic, contentious investigations of exile, displacement, and home, of what happens when a person is translated from one culture to another. Formally indebted to the fiction of Sterne, Swift, Kafka, Grass, Garcia Marquez, and de Assis, they were brassy, loud, raucous books, hymns to mongrelization that staked their claim to the world's attention by—literarily anyway—shouting.

Now, whether he likes it or not, Rushdie still commands the spotlight by having become—perversely, surreally, Kafkaesquely, as they say—the living embodiment of his work's themes. He's been cast into the farthest exile yet, a double exile, not just from his first life as a Muslim born in Bombay but from his adopted life as an Anglo-Indian writer (and atheist) educated at Cambridge, living in London. If there is any slender virtue at all to his nearly six years of isolation, it may reside in the fact that he has been able to indulge more thoroughly the exile's privilege of memory, of reinventing the past, of making a new home, and in prose.

It's no accident, then, that Rushdie's superb first collection of stories, *East, West* (Pantheon), addresses his abiding concern: how to make a home for oneself in a state of exile. But if the theme is familiar, Rushdie's treatment of it, his tone, is strikingly fresh. Mostly absent are the know-it-all, pyrotechnics of the novels. These stories generally come across as warm, quiet, tender, and—dare I say it?—endearing. These are not words or attitudes I would normally associate with Rushdie's fiction. Indeed, the book seems composed by a refugee, leaping through ancient photographs of a homeland that, through time and distance, has come to seem as impossible as a miracle. But then, that must be how Rushdie feels about the life he enjoyed before February 14, 1989.

The collection is divided into three parts of three stories each and recapitulates Rushdie's own migration from East to West. The first section, "East," could have been written by the masterful Indian writer R. K. Narayan. Set in India and Pakistan, the stories display a kind of magical, unfallen charm in establishing a world that is entirely sufficient unto itself.

England, for instance, exists merely as a rumor on the fringe of one story, a cold, gray island from which Pakistani bachelors summon brides they'd contracted for years before. Religion plays an enormous role in this East. In the extraordinary "The Prophet's Hair," all hell breaks loose in a Kashmiri family when the father accidentally discovers a glass vial purported to contain one of the Prophet Muhammad's hairs. His children are a thief to spirit it from under his pillow and return it to the mosque. But the hair, amusingly, seems to have an agenda of its own. Despite Rushdie's predilection for the literally unchaste, these tales exhibit a worn purity; they feel like repositories of village wisdom.

The collection's second section, "West," vibrates with a bleaker, harsher twang. Reading it after "East" is a bit like being uprooted from the village for graduate school in semiotics. Smart but chilly, man, Rushdie examines, successively, three heavy-duty Western archetypes—Hamlet, Christopher Columbus, and, yes, the ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*. Hamlet's story is reinvented in a monologue centered on Yorick, heretofore better known as a skull. Columbus, that protovillain of Western imperialism, receives an atypically sympathetic treatment as a misunderstood foreigner at Queen Isabella's court. And in the extravagantly imaginative "The Auction of the Ruby Slippers," it's clear that every body wants to go home, only nobody, in the commercially overheated West, has any idea any longer of where home is.

Certainly, that's the case with the Indian residents of England who populate the book's last section, "East, West." They belong fully neither to India nor to England. One aspiring writer in the spookily adulterous tale "The Harmony of the Spheres" turns to a devotee of the occult in a futile attempt to build "a bridge between here and there, between my two othernesses, my double unbelonging." The narrator of "The Courter," a story about the dignified romance of an Eastern European porter and a homesick émigré from Bombay, finally decides to forfeit what he—and, one suspects, Rushdie—has come to regard as the excruciating opportunity of "inbetweenness." "I have ropes around my neck pulling me this way and that. East and West command me, choose, choose. I refuse to choose."

In this sentence, with its echoes of Melville's recalcitrant *Bartleby*, Rushdie makes it explicit that he resides principally in a state of doubt. Rootlessness, it seems, is his—and every intellectual's—native country. But that has its compensations. The writer is entitled to the joy of the nomad, migrating from one land to another blithely crossing artificial borderlines, at home everywhere and nowhere. **B**

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## MUSIC

Mark Jacobson

# The Elvis Gospels

**P**HEW," ELVIS SAID when asked to articulate his concept of the Almighty. "Phew, that's harder than a nickel stovepipe." So, too, seventeen years after his passing, we are stumped by Elvis's inexplicable yet immortal, ever-tightening clasp on our hearts and souls. Given this fact, the fan approaches the current double-CD compilation of the King's gospel recordings, *Amazing Grace: His Greatest Sacred Performances* (RCA), with fear, trembling, and no small expectation of revelation.

Gospel music, or spirituals, as they're called in the Pentecostal piety/revel from which Elvis emerged, is the alpha and omega of the King's unparalleled career. He began not as a conscious effigy of Sam Phillips's mythic "white boy who could sing like a black" but rather by attempting to sound like the unlionized Jake Hess, lead singer of the Statesmen, who along with the Blackwood Brothers Quartet were stars on the segregated Mississippi-Tennessee tent-revival circuit. The Lord may have instilled within Elvis's breast (and crotch) the spark that ignited rock's hunka hunka burnin' fire, but while driving that truck, he dreamed of crooning "Lord, You Gave Me a Mountain" before his beaming and beloved mama, not belting "All Shook Up" for strange, wet women.

Fast-forward twenty-five years to the dead fat man on the bathroom floor, and we come to J. D. Sumner, Presley's friend and the bass singer of the Blackwood Brothers, testifying that at the time of his death, E had decided to give up pop music and sing gospel exclusively. "Elvis said it was only when he was singing about the Lord that he could think straight," Sumner said.

So what of this music, these Elvis gospels? Other great southern singers, white and black, careened, often violently, between sacred and profane polarities. The sear of hot grits pushed Al Green back into the church—which was too bad, since Green's idiosyncrasy plays better as an ambivalent lovelorn. Sam Cooke, on the other hand, never made a pop song close to "Touch the Hem of His Garment" or "Mean Old World." Either way, as with Hank Williams and even the hell-bent Jerry Lee, there is a palpable desperation of souls at

stake with these artists, the love/hate, push/pull of Robert Mitchum's tattooed hands in every note.

Graceland's supposed moral implosion aside, you don't get that struggle from Elvis. The King was always a uniquely understated singer, shy about his personal existential dilemma. More an enabler than an aggrandizer or a confessor, Elvis was put on this planet to serve, and that is what he does as a gospel singer.

This does not mean these recordings are not great. That's the essence of Elvis, his greatness as a singer: his sheer ability, against all odds, to seize pleasure for us, his fans, from the hideous material he's been handed. Certainly, there's a lot of Sunday-school schlock here, because with white gospel music, beyond masters like the Carters, you're quickly into the territory of earnest Christians with guitars and mendacious, big-haired politicians. But Elvis delivers schlock from itself. His version of "I Believe" may be schlocky, but it's transcendently so. "Somebody Bigger Than You and I" transcends its schlockiness transcendently. "Miracle of the Rosary" transcends even that, and by the time you get to the astounding "You'll Never Walk Alone," Elvis has obliterated schlockiness, elevating us to the plane where we might experience "How Great Thou Art" as something so transcendent as to be holy.

Elvis's ministry has always been one of commonality. Shortly after the King's demise, a group of Elvis impersonators appeared on *The David Susskind Show*. The panel embodied various manifestations of Elvisiana, from the slim, sneering pre-Sullivan rocker to the now-standard white-suited Vegasian, each impostor cattily claiming to possess superior Elvisness. "What do you think Elvis is doing now?" asked the highly bemused Susskind.

Locked only moments before in the sort of egoism that has bedeviled mankind since Eden, the impersonators spoke as one. "He's leading the Lord's choir," they said, spontaneously launching into an oddly moving version of "Peace in the Valley (for Me)," one of the King's favorites. It goes: "There will be peace in the valley for me... / And the lion shall lie down by the lamb / And the beast from the wild shall be lit by the Child / And I'll be changed, changed from this creature that I am." 18

### The Laser Line

New(ish) and not bad this month

**Various artists, *Lost Soul*** (Sony/Legacy): A truly inspired vault-raiding of the soulful and underappreciated. Bill Coday, Betty LaVette, Howard Tate, come home, if you're living, that is.

**M People, *Elegant Slumming*** (Epice): Fifteen years later, a great disco record appears.

**Matthew Shipp Duo (with William Parker), *Zo*** (Rise): Barbed angularity flying 3-D from both hands. Shipp blows out neo-bop.

**Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, *Vastos Vacios*** (Sony Discos): If these guys aren't the hippest ska-metal band in Buenos Aires, I'll eat my hat.

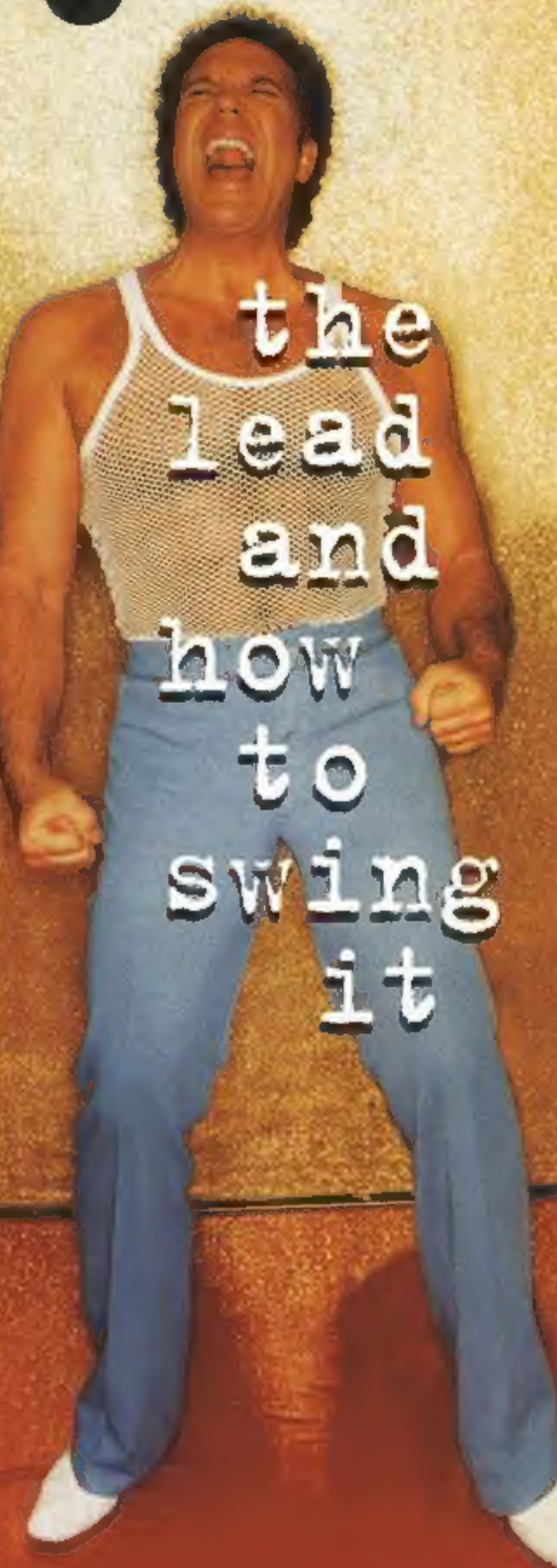
## Credits

### Fashion

**Black-Tie Affair, page 150:** Donna Karan New York tuxedo (\$1,350) at Barneys New York select stores. Donna Karan New York shirt (\$235), bow tie (\$50), and cummerbund (\$130) at Ron Ross, Los Angeles. For information contact: Donna Karan New York, 550 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10018. **Page 151:** Polo by Ralph Lauren tuxedo (\$1,095) and shirt (\$97) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York; Beverly Hills; Kansas City. For information contact: Polo/Ralph Lauren, 650 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10022. Johnston & Murphy shoes (\$170) at Johnston & Murphy nationwide; Nordstrom nationwide; Dillard's select stores. For information call 800-424-2854. **Page 152:** Hickey-Freeman tuxedo (\$900) at Barneys New York, New York; Neiman Marcus select stores; Bergdorf Goodman Men, New York. For information contact: Hickey-Freeman, 1290 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10104. Burberrys shirt (\$65) at Dayton's, Minneapolis; Strawbridge & Clothiers, Philadelphia; Mitchell's, Westport, Connecticut. For information contact: Burberrys Shirts, 575 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017. Sulka bow tie (\$115 with cummerbund) at Sulka stores, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles. For information contact: Sulka, 430 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022. **Page 154:** Ermenegildo Zegna tuxedo (\$1,200) at Neiman Marcus select stores; Ultimo, Chicago; Ermenegildo Zegna, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, California. For information contact: Ermenegildo Zegna, 743 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10022. Christian Dior shirt and bow tie at authorized Christian Dior dealers nationwide. For information call 800-243-0111. **Page 155:** Corneliani tuxedo (\$850) at Barneys New York select stores; Oliver, Los Angeles; Harry Rosen, Toronto. Gieves & Hawkes shirt (\$150) at Boyd's, Philadelphia; Mitchell's, Westport, Connecticut. For information contact: Gieves & Hawkes, 39 West Fifty-fifth St., New York, NY 10019. Robert Talbott bow tie (\$33) and vest (\$135) at Robert Talbott stores nationwide; Bergdorf Goodman Men, New York; Nordstrom nationwide. For information contact: Talbott Studios, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. Florsheim Royal Imperial shoes (\$190) at Florsheim Shoe Shops nationwide. For information call 800-446-3500. Hublot watch (\$2,250) at Lester Lampert, Chicago; Tourneau, New York; Fred's, Beverly Hills. For information call 800-536-0636. **Country Weekend, page 156:** Brooks Brothers jacket (\$395) at Brooks Brothers stores nationwide. For information call 800-274-1815. Sulka pullover (\$595) at Sulka stores nationwide. For information contact: Sulka, 430 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022. Gucci shirt (\$165) at Gucci, New York, Chicago, and Beverly Hills. For information contact: Gucci, 685 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10022. Nigel's by Nathan

David pants (\$155) at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York. For information contact: Nigel's by Nathan David, 1290 Ave. of the Americas, Suite 2038, New York, NY 10104. J. M. Weston loafers (\$375) at J. M. Weston, New York. For information contact: J. M. Weston, 42 East Fifty-seventh St., New York, NY 10022. Polo by Ralph Lauren tie. For information call 800-775-POLO. Paul Stuart hat (\$124) at Paul Stuart, New York. For information call 800-678-8278. Alberto Biani per New York jacket (\$690) at Maxfield, Los Angeles. For information contact: Staff USA, 27 West Seventy-fourth St., New York, NY 10023. A. P. C. pullover (\$120) at A. P. C., New York. For information contact: A. P. C., 131 Mercer St., New York, NY 10012. Nautica by David Chu trousers (\$135) at the Nautica Store, New York. For information contact: Nautica, 40 West Fifty-seventh St., New York, NY 10019. Alfred Dunhill scarf (\$195) at Alfred Dunhill of London, New York, Chicago, and Beverly Hills. For information call 800-776-4053. Millars Connemara Tweeds by Irish Collectibles hat (\$39) at Frank Stella, New York; Mark Shale, Chicago; Huntington Clothiers, Columbus, Ohio. For information contact: Irish Collectibles, 101 West Fifty-fifth St., #8H, New York, NY 10019. Manfield by H. Kauffman & Sons Saddlery boots (\$295) at H. Kauffman & Sons Saddlery, New York. For information call 800-872-6687. Sulka jacket (\$1,550) at Sulka stores nationwide. For information contact: Sulka, 430 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022. Brooks Brothers sweater (\$295) at Brooks Brothers stores nationwide. For information call 800-274-1815. Nigel's by Nathan David pants (\$175) at Saks Fifth Avenue, New York. For information contact: Nigel's by Nathan David, 1290 Ave. of the Americas, Suite 2038, New York, NY 10104. J. M. Weston boots (\$535) at J. M. Weston, New York. For information contact: J. M. Weston, 42 East Fifty-seventh St., New York, NY 10022. **Page 157:** Polo by Ralph Lauren jacket (\$395) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York and Beverly Hills; I. Magnin, Los Angeles. For information call 800-775-POLO. Paul Stuart turtleneck (\$157) and trousers (\$156) at Paul Stuart, New York. For information call 800-678-8278. H. Kauffman & Sons Saddlery boots (\$325) at H. Kauffman & Sons Saddlery, New York. For information call 800-872-6687. **Page 158:** Brooks Brothers sport jacket (\$595) at Brooks Brothers stores nationwide. For information call 800-274-1815. Malo turtleneck (\$565) at Malo boutique, New York. For information contact: Malo, 791 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021. Levi Strauss & Co. jeans (\$42). For information call 800-USA-LEVI. Brooks Brothers sport jacket (\$350) at Brooks Brothers stores nationwide. For information call 800-274-1815. Salvatore Ferragamo turtleneck at Salvatore Ferragamo and fine department stores nationwide. For information contact: Salvatore Fer-

# Tom Jones



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Mesa, California, Bal Harbour and Palm Beach, Florida. For information call 800-234-8463. Page 164: Patek Philippe watch at fine stores nationwide. For information contact: Patek Philippe, 1 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020. Movado watch at Movado Design Store, New York. For information contact: Movado Watch Co., 125 Chubb Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071. Breitling watches at Tourneau, New York, Costa Mesa, California, Bal Harbour and Palm Beach, Florida. For information call 800-528-5871.

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